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Mission to free trapped monitors

SAS ready for rescue in Kosovo

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE EDITOR

A SUBSTANTIAL force of SAS troops is on alert to mount a "high risk" rescue operation in Kosovo if any unarmoured international monitors in the Yugoslav province are taken hostage.

The decision to enlist the SAS for hostage-rescue in Kosovo came after Brigadier-General Marcel Valentin, the French commander of Nato's extraction force based in the neighbouring Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, said his 2,300 soldiers would be incapable of carrying out such a specialist operation.

The Government has given its approval for a proposed Nato special forces unit, "several hundred strong", to be led by a senior British officer, and the bulk of the force is to be provided by the SAS, although other countries can contribute if required when an emergency arises.

The SAS sent more than 300 troops to the Gulf War in 1991 but this new operation is expected to be the largest formation of Special Air Service soldiers for a hostage-rescue mission. The hostage-rescue expertise of the Herford-based SAS is renowned throughout the world, especially after the 1980 Iranian Embassy siege.

If groups of Kosovo-based verifiers from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) were to be taken hostage either by Serb forces or Kosovo Liberation Army guerrillas, the SAS

would be flown to the region to prepare for a rescue.

The OSCE team is currently 750-strong but is building up to a total of 2,000 personnel, many of them military or ex-military. Britain is providing 200.

Although the present Nato extraction force is based in Macedonia, permission has not yet been sought from the Government in Skopje for any further deployments of Nato troops in Macedonian territory. However, it remains the most likely base for a rescue operation.

When Nato began planning late last year for an extraction force to be based in Macedonia, it was always envisaged that a special forces team would be needed if hostages were taken.

Nato sources said that the French-led force, originally to be 1,800-strong but now expanded to 2,300, was never going to be suitably equipped for mounting any operation in a hostile environment.

The sources said it was planned to be a force that could go over the border to evacuate the OSCE verifiers in a "hostile environment" and to carry out medical evacuations. The force is equipped with helicopters and armoured vehicles.

The structure and mandate for the extraction unit was also supposed to provide reassurance to President Milosevic, the Yugoslav leader, that Nato

was not building an invasion force, alliance sources said.

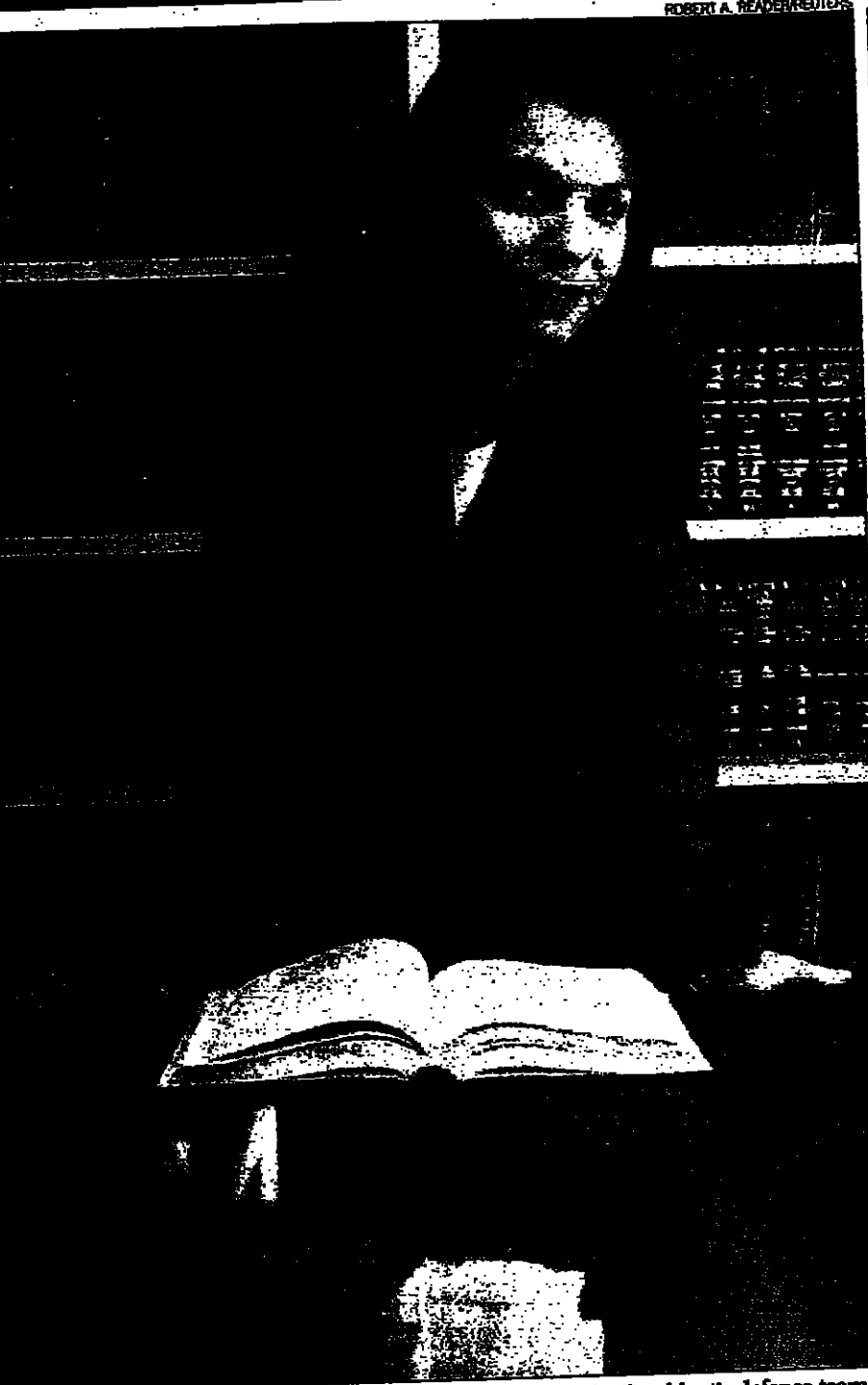
However, since the massacre of the 45 Albanians by Serb forces, Nato has had to bring forward plans for two other potential military operations.

Apart from the special forces' hostage-rescue team, a third tier is now under consideration which would involve the deployment of between 8,000 and 10,000 Nato troops, including British, to evacuate the whole OSCE verification team from Kosovo if there is all-out war. Nato sources said the large force "would be backed by artillery and ground support aircraft."

If Nato Governments decide to launch airstrikes to punish Belgrade for the weekend massacre, it is likely that the OSCE verifiers would be told to leave. In the event of any violent opposition to their withdrawal, Nato would have to decide how to guarantee their safety. General Wesley Clark, Nato's supreme allied commander Europe, who met Mr Milosevic in Belgrade yesterday, is expected to brief the North Atlantic Council in Brussels this week on the three-tier proposals.

In the Commons yesterday, Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, said that British aircraft could be mobilised within days should Nato decide to mount airstrikes.

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Secret weapon: Nicole Seligman is one of two women on the President's defence team

Clinton's Ally McBeal takes on the Senators

FROM DAMIAN WHITWORTH IN WASHINGTON

SHE has been dubbed President Clinton's secret weapon. An attractive, high-powered lawyer who will blow away the grey-haired men bent on removing him from office.

As the White House began its defence of Mr Clinton in the impeachment trial last night, the woman nicknamed his Ally McBeal was waiting in the wings.

Nicole Seligman, 42, is one of two women lawyers expected to provide a marked contrast with the 13 Republican prosecutors who presented the case against Mr Clinton. The other, Cheryl Mills, is a brilliant black lawyer who joined Mr Clinton's legal team when he entered the White House.

In reality, depicting Ms Seligman as a real-life Ally McBeal is not entirely accurate. Her attractive looks are matched by an incisive legal brain, but she is far more devastatingly ruthless in court than the television character.

George Stephanopoulos, Mr Clinton's former spokesman, coined the "secret weapon" tag and other Clinton advisers have said they are in awe of her talents. "There's velvet on the outside and there's a hard rock on the inside," said Lanny Davis, a former White House lawyer. "She can be tough and yet she can turn very charming and feminine,

which takes a witness by surprise. So if she doesn't get them one way, she'll get them another," said Brendan Sullivan, who led Oliver North's defence team during the Iran-Contra scandal. Ms Seligman helped to defend Mr North — and in the courtroom was mistaken for his daughter by some commentators. A graduate of Harvard Law School whose best friend is President Kennedy's daughter Caroline Kennedy, she edited the prestigious *Harvard Review* and worked briefly for the *Wall Street Journal* before a stint at the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court. She then joined Williams & Connolly, where she teamed up with David Kendall, Mr Clinton's chief personal lawyer.

Ms Seligman has worked repeatedly for Mrs Clinton during the Whitewater investigations and for most of last year was working on the Monica Lewinsky affair. She was the only woman present when Mr Clinton gave his Grand Jury testimony via closed circuit television in the White House.

Although Charles Ruff, the chief White House lawyer and a veteran of the Watergate prosecution, opened the defence yesterday, Ms Seligman is expected to play a key role in proceedings. Ms Mills, 33, who knows the Clinton regime

inside out and has been another force behind the scenes, is also expected to take a central role in the Senate chamber, perhaps outlining Mr Clinton's version of events surrounding the retrieval of gifts he had given to Ms Lewinsky. As the White House tried to assemble a bigger team for a defence presentation that could take up to the 24 hours allotted, it suffered one setback when Rick Boucher, a Democratic representative, said that he was not available to help. Former Senate majority leader George Mitchell, the chairman of the Northern Ireland peace process, was also mentioned as one who would try to convince the 100 Senators not to convict Mr Clinton on the two articles of impeachment.

The defence strategy is to attack the facts in the prosecution case and insist that even if those facts are true, they do not justify his removal from office because the offences do not rise to the level of "treason, bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanours", the constitutional standard for impeachment and conviction. Fresh polls yesterday showed that 61 per cent of Americans thought Mr Clinton should not be convicted, while his approval rating remained at 69 per cent.

Prison on cards for Aitken after he admits libel case perjury

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

JONATHAN AITKEN, the former Conservative Cabinet minister, yesterday faced the threat of a lengthy prison sentence after admitting at the Central Criminal Court charges of perjury and perverting the course of justice.

The disgraced former Tory high-flyer confessed to drawing up a false witness statement which he persuaded his teenage daughter, Victoria, to sign to support his lies during his unsuccessful High Court libel action against *The Guardian* and Granada TV.

His civil action in June 1997 centred on the allegation by the newspaper and the TV company that he had stayed at the Ritz Hotel in Paris in 1993 at the expense of prominent Saudi Arabian friends while serving as Minister for Defence Procurement.

Aitken, 56, will be sentenced in June at the conclusion of the trial of his co-defendant and former business associate Said Ayas.

For acts intended to pervert the course of justice, the maximum sentence is life and, for perjury, up to seven years.

Said Ayas has yet to enter pleas to charges of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice, and doing acts tending and intended to pervert the course of justice.

Aitken, of Lord North Street, Westminster, central London, denied two further charges — alleging conspiracy with his ex-wife Lolicia and Said Ayas to pervert the course of justice, and doing acts tending and intended to pervert the course of justice.

Crown counsel David Waters accepted those not guilty pleas and the Recorder of London Michael Hyam ordered the two counts to lie on file.

Aitken, who arrived at the



Aitken: will not know his fate until June

Old Bailey with his mother, Lady Aitken, served under John Major, first as Defence Procurement Minister and then as First Secretary to the Treasury, which post he resigned to fight his libel action. When the action collapsed, he was left with a £2 million legal bill.

Aitken, who lost his seat as Tory MP for Thanet, Kent, at the general election, was divorced last year from his wife by whom he has twin daughters.

Continued on Page 4, col 5



"Cheer up — it's not nearly as bad as Jonathan Aitken's"

England are back inside

England were readmitted to the Five Nations rugby union championship less than 24 hours after being expelled from the competition over a television deal. Their opening match against Scotland will go ahead as planned on February 20.

B&E accused

British Aerospace was said to have damaged European co-operation by its £7 billion merger with GEC's Marconi Electronic Systems.

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Public to choose 'people's peers'

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND JAMES LANDALE

THE public is to be given the power to nominate "people's peers" under proposals published today to scrap the rights of hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords.

People will be able to write to the new independent appointments commission which will choose crossbench peers for the interim House of Lords once hereditary peers are banished to the shires.

Tony Blair has decided that the practice introduced by John Major of allowing the public to nominate people for honours in the twice-yearly lists should be extended.

The "people's lords" will be those chosen by the commission in addition to peers nominated by political parties. Mr Blair is to give up his power to veto the names put forward by other parties although he will keep the right to say how many should come from each.

The death knell will sound today for the 750 hereditary peers when the Bill abolishing

their voting powers and a White Paper setting up a royal commission to recommend the shape of a new second chamber are published.

"They will also lose their 'club rights' to use the restaurants and bars at the Lords," Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, said at the weekend that the Bill would mean for the hereditary peerage an end to "living like a lord at the taxpayers' expense". The royal commission, expected to be chaired by Lord Butler of Brockwell, will be asked to report by the end of the year.

The deal that led to the sacking of Viscount Cranborne as Tory leader in the Lords — allowing 91 hereditary peers to survive in the interim stage — will not be included in the Bill, but added as an amendment as it passes through the Lords.

Lord Cranborne will today speak in the Lords for the first time since he was sacked. He is likely to urge peers to accept the deal he secured for them.

Film about 'selfish' du Pré outrages musicians

By SUSIE STEINER

SIX classical musicians, including the cellist Julian Lloyd Webber and the violinist Lord Menuhin, have written to *The Times* today expressing outrage at a new film about the life of Jacqueline du Pré.

The film *Hilary and Jackie*, which is to have its premiere today, chronicles the life of du Pré and portrays her as selfish, spoilt and manipulative, according to the musicians. "This is not the Jacqueline du Pré that we, as her friends and colleagues, knew," the letter says.

Mr Lloyd Webber and Lord Menuhin are joined in their anger by Itzhak Perl-

man, William Pleeth, Mstislav Rostropovich and Pinchas Zukerman, all of whom worked with du Pré.

Her solo cello performances, particularly of Elgar, in the 1960s made du Pré famous and inspired Mr Lloyd Webber's own career as a cellist; her early death from multiple sclerosis made her turbulent life a focus for scrutiny.

The film, in which du Pré is portrayed by Emily Watson, focuses on the cellist's affair with her sister's husband Kiffer, which was said to be condoned by Hilary to safeguard her sister's fragile emotional state. Watson has been nominated for a Golden-Globe for her part in the film.

which is based on a book by du Pré's sister and her brother Piers, entitled *A Genius in the Family*.

But *Hilary and Jackie* discredits du Pré, according to her supporters. "Jacqueline possessed a wonderful joy in making music and a unique ability to bring that joy to her audience. This is the Jacqueline du Pré that we remember," the letter says.

Lord Menuhin knew du Pré well and his daughters were among her best friends; the violinist Itzhak Perlman also worked closely with her.



du Pré: six defenders

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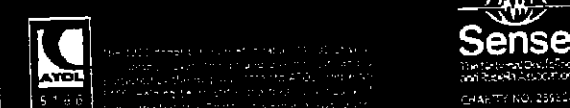
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Thing gives Blair a helping Hand from the back benches

A ficionados of the Addams Family movies will be familiar with a creature called Thing. It is a disembodied hand. It scuttles around the Addamses' creepy mansion doing the family's dirty work. Need a tap fixing, a corpse burying, a mess shovelling under the carpet or a cat throttling in the night? Thing will fix it.

Big-suited Gomez Addams, the head of the household, relies implicitly on the Hand. So does his wife, the palely cadaverous Morticia. How Gomez reminds me of Tony Blair.

At Foreign Office Questions yesterday, a Hand appeared, a man's hand, just before the first question on Europe. This sketchwriter could not say whether the Hand was unattached because, were there a body in tow, its owner had placed himself in the least visible spot in the chamber.

Let me explain. The press sits in a balcony over one end of the chamber, arranged like a shallow dress circle above the Speaker's chair. Only the tops of the heads of MPs at this end are visible. The chair

is crowned with a huge canopy, blocking views of the benches beneath and creating a blind spot on one bench on the government side. Its occupant is invisible to almost all the press; invisible to me.

But I could see a Hand. A right Hand. Visible only from the wrist, like Thing.

The Hand appeared some way into Questions yesterday, and settled, fingers fanned, on the edge of the seat. Horrified, I watched it. It seemed to be intently following ministers' answers: tensing, fidgeting, relax-



ing... depending on what they said. No name, no face, but a weird sense of responsibility, control. We have heard of the Minister Without Portfolio (one such, with his Dome, was famous), but now, freing here on the green leather, seemed to be a Portfolio Without Minister.

And it was with European

policy that the Hand looked most concerned. It missed the exchanges on St Helena, ignored Kosovo, and arrived just in time to hear Norman Godman (Lab. Greenock & Inverclyde) ask about the enlargement of the European Union.

The Hand looked relaxed about a careful reply from the

minister, Joyce Quinn. But when a leftwinger, Jeremy Corbyn (Lab. Islington N) rose, it scratched angrily at the seat panel. Dennis Skinner (Lab. Bolsover) shouted "When does Albania get in?" The Hand scratched harder.

Andrew Mackinlay (Lab. Thurrock) complained that too few members of the Government were visiting the aspirant members of the EU. Fingers on the Hand quivered. Would it like to visit them, representing the Prime Minister? The Tories' Michael

Howard asked a muscular question about joining the euro. The Hand scabbled impatiently on the bench.

Discussion moved to India and Kashmir. The Hand stretched lazily, fingers outstretched and at rest. When immigration, Iraq and the Middle East were raised, the Hand became bored, drumming fingers. When questions turned to "ethics" in foreign policy, the Hand lost interest and curled up.

I glanced at my order paper: Burma, Basra, Nigeria... no

more questions on Europe seemed likely to be reached. Perhaps the Hand had made a similar calculation. It rose into the air above the bench. Then, hovering left toward the door, moved from my vision, hidden by the canopy over the Speaker's chair.

I leapt up. Dashing to a corner from which the Hand's ed might be visible, I strained to see.

Someone was hurrying out. It was Peter Mandelson, pale and tense. The Hand was with him.

Lords to ask Cook for Pinochet dates

Crown argues that immunity cannot cover all crimes, writes Joanna Bale

THE law lords confirmed yesterday that they are to seek clarification from Robin Cook over the date on which General Pinochet was recognised as head of state, in what could be a key piece of evidence.

The move comes amid claims by the Crown Prosecution Service on behalf of Spain that the former dictator could not claim state immunity for some of the crimes alleged against him because they were committed before he took on the role.

As the new panel of seven law lords convened for a second day yesterday, its chairman, Lord Browne-Wilkinson, said: "We discussed it overnight and thought it was desirable to have the Foreign Office's view if they are able to give it. It may or may not be vital, but it would be helpful."

Lord Browne-Wilkinson also asked Alun Jones, QC, for the CPS, to prepare overnight a document outlining his "heavily revised case" alleging that General Pinochet, along with other public officials, was involved in a conspiracy to torture others even before he seized power.

Once again accompanied by the Spanish investigating judge Baltasar Garçon, Mr Jones went on to argue that only a limited number of functions of a head of state were regarded as attracting immunity under international law. He said: "Those functions are con-

BRITAIN'S ONLY 'POLITICAL PRISONER'

Baroness Thatcher has described as "excellent" a pamphlet written by her senior aide which claims that General Pinochet has been "kidnapped" by Britain and is being held as a political prisoner. Dr Robin Harris yesterday launched his pamphlet, *A Tale of Two Chileans: Pinochet and Allende*, at the Howard Hotel in London. Dr Harris, who was the General from all alleged war crimes, Dr Harris was joined by Conservatives including Lord Lamont of Lerwick, Sir Ray Whitney and Nicholas and Ann Winterdon. The launch was attended by supporters who had flown from Chile for the law lords' hearing. Dr Harris said: "Abuses were committed but under whose authority it is not clear. Pinochet saved his country from a Marxist dictatorship."

fined to state visits, signing treaties, and the sending and receiving of diplomats."

If countries chose to give their head of state more functions, they did not merit immunity. "Individual states may allocate other powers to them, but if a person who is head of state holds other portfolios, they are not recognised in international law as the functions of a head of state, and are not therefore functions in respect of which he enjoys immunity after he has retired," Mr Jones said.

He acknowledged that a head of state was widely regarded as enjoying absolute immunity while in power, but the position changed after he left office.

Mr Jones argued that some acts, such as offences against humanity and war crimes, had been recognised as crimes

under international law long before 1973 and the basis of various international conventions covering human rights and abuses of them was clear.

He said: "It must be that, no matter who you are, whether you are a head of state, a government official, a public official, you have individual, personal responsibility in respect of a category of crimes recognised internationally as particularly odious, such as genocide, torture, and taking hostages. Somewhere a line has to be drawn between actions which are the functions of a head of state, and those which are not."

In a situation in which the United Kingdom was declining to put General Pinochet on trial in this country, it had an obligation to extradite him to Spain under the international Convention against Torture,

and under the European Extradition Act, he added. Chile itself, he pointed out, ratified the torture convention in 1988. Its own 1925 constitution forbade the use of torture.

Professor Christopher Greenwood, dealing with the legal issues raised by the Spanish extradition request, then addressed the question of whether national courts, such as those of Spain, had jurisdiction over internationally recognised crimes. He said that, as yet, there was no international tribunal at which to try people accused of such crimes. But he told the law lords that there was "the very clearest guidance" that, certainly since the Second World War, national courts had increasingly been asserting jurisdiction over crimes such as torture.

Last November, a different panel of law lords ruled that the former dictator was not immune, but that decision was set aside when it was held that the link of one of the judges, Lord Hoffman, with Amnesty International, should have disqualified him from sitting.

Among those present at the new hearing, which continues today, is Mario Araya, the Chilean Ambassador. He has been sent back to London to ensure that his Government's case is properly presented. He was recalled to Santiago last month in protest at the Home Secretary's decision to allow extradition proceedings.



William Cuthbert leaving the Commons after appearing before MPs yesterday

Bitter pill for GP as he is 'named and shamed'

BY VALERIE ELLIOTT, WHITEHALL EDITOR

THE first GP to be "named and shamed" before MPs yesterday admitted that he felt guilty about his treatment of a dying elderly woman who was unable to swallow her pain-killing morphine tablets.

William Cuthbert, who is a family doctor in Wolverhampton, expressed deep remorse as he appeared yesterday before the Commons Public Administration Select Committee. A complaint against him by the daughter of the woman, who died within 24 hours, was upheld by the Health Services Ombudsman in his first case questioning a doctor's clinical judgment.

Dr Cuthbert took a coach from Wolverhampton to attend yesterday's 11am hearing but it arrived late. The hearing was adjourned until 11.30am when the GP arrived red-faced and clearly embarrassed by his delay.

Michael Buckley, the ombudsman, told MPs he believed that the doctor's behaviour "fell well short of the professional service which the patient and her family had a right to expect".

Dr Cuthbert spoke candidly

about his poor relationship with the dying woman's daughter and admitted that this was why he almost treated her call "with a pinch of salt". He said that the experience had made him more vigilant. "I now look out for banana skins."

The episode began on a Saturday morning - June 22, 1997. Dr Cuthbert was shopping when he was contacted by his out-of-hours message service to say that Mrs X, his patient's daughter, said her mother could not swallow her morphine tablets and could they have a syringe-driver, which acts like a drip to deliver drugs.

Mrs X said she also told the message service she had been in contact with the local hospice which was willing to lend her a syringe-driver if the doctor gave it a telephone call authorising the assistance.

Dr Cuthbert said he was never told about the offer from the hospice but admitted that the daughter was "particularly demanding" and often said that her mother was unable to do something or needed a particular piece of appara-

tus, when she did not. "I suppose I did almost take the call with a pinch of salt because she was complaining about a lot of things her mother couldn't do. It's possible that it could have clouded my judgment."

"I feel guilty. I feel I could have done better, but I feel there was a poor lack of communication." He apparently told the telephoneist to tell the family they would have to "manage somehow" through the weekend - a phrase Dr Cuthbert denied using.

Mrs X called the out-of-hours service again that day and the on-call locum visited the house and gave the patient a morphine injection, but she died the next morning.

Ronnie Campbell, Labour MP for Blyth Valley, said: "If you knew the patient was seriously ill and in great pain, when you got that sort of message, don't you think it would have been your duty to go and see the patient straight away?"

Dr Cuthbert said: "With hindsight, yes." He added that he had since apologised to Mrs X several times.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Labour MP leaves wife of 30 years

A Labour MP has left his wife of 30 years for another woman. Denis Murphy, the member for the Northumberland constituency of Wansbeck, admitted yesterday that he had been involved in a relationship with Grace Boyle for "some time". Before being elected in 1997, Mr Murphy, 49, led the controlling Labour group on Wansbeck District Council, where Mrs Boyle works in the administration department.

Last October David Cleland, the Labour MP for Tyne Bridge, confirmed that he had left his wife of 33 years, Maureen, after admitting a relationship with his secretary, Brenda Graham.

Millennium call

The millennium celebrations should begin with Midnight Mass at Christmas rather than on December 31, Cardinal Basil Hume, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, said. "The crib will always be more important than the Dome," he told an inter-denominational service.

Law overturned

The European Court has overturned a Greek criminal law, ruling it incompatible with the Treaty of Rome. The judges acknowledged that in principle criminal laws were for nations alone, but Greece could not expect convicted drug users for life as that breached freedom of movement for EU citizens.

Lawrence action

The second-in-command of the Stephen Lawrence murder inquiry will face disciplinary action despite announcing his retirement, the Metropolitan Police said last night. Detective Inspector Ben Bullock, 49, will go before a tribunal on March 22. He has been accused of neglect of duty.

Royal E-mail



The Royal Mail launched its first stamp with a flat rate to send letters across the Continent and beyond. The stamp, above, costs 30p and is valid from Britain to more than 50 countries, including Tajikistan and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The price is replaced by a small E in the bottom left-hand corner.

Inner-city schools criticised by Blair

BY HANNAH BEITS

TONY BLAIR was criticised yesterday for undermining teachers after he said he understood parents who refused to send their children to inner-city schools.

Head teachers accused him of giving parents licence to ignore their local comprehensive schools.

Mr Blair's comments came days after it was announced that the Blair's youngest child, Kathryn, is to follow her two brothers by attending a secondary school several miles from the family home.

Speaking on BBC Radio 4's *Today*, Mr Blair said: "When I look at some of the inner-city schools it is no wonder parents feel they have to move their children out." Mr Blair later reinforced his condemnation of inner-city schools in a debate with teachers on the Government's new £60 million performance-related pay scheme.

The Prime Minister told teachers at Moulsham High School in Chelmsford, Essex: "I know from my own experience that there's not enough understanding in this country of the fundamental importance of getting the system right."

John Dunford, general secretary of the School Heads' Association, said: "This is the sort of self-fulfilling prophecy that makes it difficult for schools to succeed in the inner cities. The Prime Minister should be leading the state education system, not undermining it."

Wales may lose voice in Cabinet

BY VALERIE ELLIOTT, WHITEHALL EDITOR

WALES could lose its voice at the Cabinet table after the cessation of the Welsh assembly. The end of the office of Welsh Secretary was signalled yesterday at a meeting of the Commons Welsh Affairs Select Committee.

Rachel Lomax, Permanent Secretary at the Welsh Office, hesitated when she was asked by Julian Lewis, a Conservative MP, whether she would join him in a bet that there would be a Secretary of State within ten years. "All sorts of things could happen in ten years," she said.

Her reticence was not lost on MPs and Alun Michael, the Welsh Secretary, said: "The really interesting job is that of First Secretary in the assembly. The role of Secretary of State will develop."

Tacit admission that the role of Welsh Secretary was under threat was seized on by Oppo-

sition MPs who believe that Tony Blair's plans for devolution could lead to the break-up of the United Kingdom. Rod Richards, leader of the Welsh Conservative Party, said: "This has let the cat out of the bag. This just shows that the office of Secretary of State is on death row."

Suspensions were heightened by news that only 24 civil servants will work for the Welsh Secretary after devolution, while 1,800 officials will work for the assembly which is to cost £120 million in its first year.

Ms Lomax insisted that after the assembly elections on May 6 the Welsh Secretary would still have to be responsible for any primary legislation at Westminster, would sit in the Cabinet, attend Cabinet committees, and represent Wales in any European negotiations.

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THE TIMES WEDNESDAY JANUARY 20 1999

TV chat show guest ends up in the dock

Viewer says man she saw chatting to Richard and Judy is a removal conman. Adam Fresco reports

A WEALTHY businesswoman who turned on her television to watch the Richard and Judy chat show, recognised their guest as a removal man who had driven off with £60,000 worth of her possessions six years earlier, a court was told yesterday.

Patricia McMahon had been moving home with the help of John Parsons in 1992 when he allegedly stole a haul including gold rings, necklaces and other items studded with precious stones valued at £30,000, her prized collection of china and crystal, a new hi-fi system and a number of antique paintings, none of which was insured.

Miss McMahon, an American, first spotted Mr Parsons, who at the time called himself Damien West, a few months later, but was too scared to approach him.

Southwark Crown Court was told. She thought that she would never see him again.

But in June last year when Miss McMahon switched on ITV's *This Morning* programme, she saw him happily chatting to Richard Madeley and Judy Finnegan.

She contacted ITV and the police, who traced the man to Manchester where he had changed his name.

Mr Parsons, 44, from Manchester, who denies one



Parsons denies playing any part in the theft

charge of theft between February and March 1992, insisted that he was innocent. He agreed that he had helped her to move home but said that the theft was "absolutely nothing" to do with him.

Miss McMahon said that she met Mr Parsons after arriving in London to manage a Mayfair apartment block. She was staying in one of the luxury flats as she and her brothers made inquiries about buying the development, but the deal fell through so she decided to move to Chelsea.

Mr Parsons was the maintenance man at the Mayfair apartments and offered to

help her to move, she said. He hired a van and began loading her belongings. Miss McMahon said that on the day of the move, her suspicions were aroused because he seemed to be acting differently.

"I had the feeling something had gone wrong - it seemed that things were not going to any plan he might have and he seemed a bit agitated."

Nevertheless, she allowed him to finish loading and they drove together to Chelsea. Mr Parsons carried a box of china up to the first-floor flat and suggested that she start unpacking while he parked in a better place, she said. About ten minutes later, she noticed that her handbag containing her wallet, keys and credit cards was missing from the table where she had left it.

Seconds later, she was stunned to realise that the same fate had befallen the rest of the property. It had vanished along with Mr Parsons and the van, the jury was told.

She said: "I checked to see if the van was still there and looked out of the window, but could not see it. I went downstairs for a closer look... but it had vanished."

Miss McMahon said that she had dialled 999 to report the theft to police, but never saw her belongings again. The trial continues.



Patricia McMahon says that she lost jewellery, china and other items worth £60,000

Police worker 'took indecent photographs'

By Russell Jenkins

A PHOTOGRAPHER employed by the police to take pictures of victims of crime took indecent photographs of a woman who alleged that she had been battered, a court was told yesterday.

Peter Sayward, 43, of Lytham, Lancashire, should have seen the 24-year-old woman, who had reported an assault by her boyfriend, at Blackburn police station and confined his attention to bruises on her face, nose and hands.

But he went to her home where he insisted on touching her intimately in order to take photographs of her breasts, and joked about selling the results for a "Page 3" slot.

The woman, who cannot be named for legal reasons, said that Mr Sayward asked to see any other marks on her body but she told him there was none. However, he asked her to lift her pyjama top and her crop top. She told the court: "I just did what he told me to."

As soon as Mr Sayward left the woman complained to a neighbour and then to police. Several further allegations of indecent assault emerged as a result of a subsequent inquiry into his work.

Mr Sayward spent 18 years in the Merseyside force before retiring and joining the Lancashire Constabulary as a civilian scenes-of-crime photographer. He has pleaded not

guilty to three charges of indecent assault.

Chris Knight, for the prosecution, said that Mr Sayward visited the woman in January last year to take straightforward photographs of her injuries. Instead he took "completely unacceptable photographs" of the woman, including a full-frontal view of her exposed breasts.

He steered the conversation towards sex and sought to cuddle or embrace her under the guise of trying to placate her, though she showed no signs of distress.

He also got her to change into the pyjamas she was wearing at the time of the attack, then physically examined her.

The court was told how Mr Sayward photographed another woman assault victim in August 1997. The 23-year-old woman had suffered bruising to her thigh and went to a police station for photographs to be taken. Mr Sayward photographed her with her skirt hitched above her underpants and felt the bruising in an indecent manner.

The third incident involved the 23-year-old's mother. During a visit to the victim's house, Mr Sayward gathered coins that had fallen from the mother's blouse pocket and had brushed his hand against her breast while placing them back.

The trial continues.

Chipperfield 'beat chimp till it cried'

By Helen Johnstone

A MEMBER of the Chipperfield circus dynasty was secretly filmed forcing a sick elephant to perform pirouettes and beating other animals, a court was told yesterday.

The offences alleged against Mary Chipperfield were uncovered when animal-welfare activists infiltrated the farm that she and her husband, Roger Cawley, own in Hampshire and secretly filmed there for several months.

Miss Chipperfield, 61, who appeared before Andover Magistrates' Court yesterday under her married name, Mary Cawley, denies 21 charges relating to animal cruelty and neglect of circus animals between October 1997 and January 1998. Mr Cawley, 64, and joint proprietor of Mary Chipperfield Promotions Ltd, denies seven charges.

The case had originally been brought by the Animal Defenders charity in a civil action but the Crown Prosecution Service took it on after the campaigners produced their

evidence. Miss Chipperfield told police that her treatment of the animals was justified to discipline them and she would become the same way again.

There were gasps from the public gallery as the court was shown footage of a trainer employed by Miss Chipperfield striking an elephant 12 times around the legs and back with a metal rod. One clip showed her briefly watching.

Charles Gabb, for the prosecution, said the evidence suggested that, to the couple, "the ends of training the animals justify the means". He said that in 1997, Terry Stocker, a member of Animal Defenders, had taken up work at the farm caring for the animals, which included tigers, lions, elephants, bears and camels. He set up three video cameras and carried a body camera.

Another group member, Rachel White, posed as his girlfriend. Video film that they handed to police showed an incident in which Miss Chipperfield beat an 18-month-old

chimpanzee called Trudi after it refused to get into its cage.

Mr Gabb told the court: "She used a riding crop to beat the chimp. She also kicked it. It shows manifest cruelty by this lady to beat it almost mercilessly and when she leaves it to remove its discomfort, an orange ball. You can hear the pitiful, pathetic cries of the chimp and Mrs Cawley is heard to say 'You can bloody cry'."

She was alleged to have kicked a camel to get it to stand up, and when that failed to have beaten it with a stick. She is alleged to have whipped other camels on the back and underbelly with a stick to try to make them walk in a line round the farm's parade ring.

Magistrates heard that Miss Chipperfield made an elephant called Flora perform pirouettes in the ring when it was unwilling. Mr Gabb said: "The elephant did not respond to Mrs Cawley's commands. So Mrs Cawley goes up with no reason and whacks it with a very large piece of wood." He said the animals led a miserable existence in which they were shackled for long periods.

Mr Stocker told the court that he had seen Miss Chipperfield hit the chimpanzee 20 times with the crop in a frenzied beating. She kicked it ten times. "It was a severe beating. I went back the next day and saw red marks on Trudi's body, which I photographed."

The supervisory magistrate, Roger House, was shown footage of Stephen Gills, a trainer employed by the Cawleys, beating elephants with a spade and an iron bar. The court was told that the couple knew that he was violent and cruel to their animals. The trial continues.

Mary Chipperfield and her husband, who deny the charges

Jobcentre bans adverts for Full Monty troupe

By Simon de Bruxelles

A SUCCESSFUL group of Full Monty-style male strippers has been banned from advertising for new recruits in jobcentres.

The dancers, who perform under the name Centaur and were the subject of a BBC documentary last year, need new members for a nationwide tour. No qualification or experience are required, but striking visuals need not apply.

Despite offering the successful candidates between £75 and £100 a day, the adverts for "revue dancers" have fallen foul of a Depart-

ment of Employment ban on jobs in the "sex industry".

In the film *The Full Monty* a group of unemployed men from Sheffield meet at their local job club, decide to take up stripping, and become an overnight sensation. The job club's success is unlikely to be emulated in Centaur's home town, Swansea, where jobcentre managers rigidly abide by the rules.

Centaur's manager, Richie Rees, a 34-year-old married father of five, was turned away by both of his local jobcentres, which refused to help find three

more strippers to join the four-man team. Mr Rees, who began stripping for a living six years ago, said: "One of the officials was a woman who recognised me from the shows. I thought they were prudes. People are meant to be a bit more open-minded these days."

A Department of Employment spokesman said yesterday: "We are not taking a moral stand or making a value judgement on these jobs. It is just that we do not want to put our clients in a position where they might feel embarrassed or humiliated."



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TRAVEL INFORMATION

The charming swashbuckler who fell on sword of truth

THE fall of Jonathan Aitken is an morality tale. He has been tantalisingly close to the centre of power, serially intimate with a string of beautiful women, but a lifelong stranger to the truth.

The crime to which he has pleaded guilty, perjury in a civil case, is the same crime of which President Clinton stands accused. Some observers believe that, like President Clinton, this is merely the culmination of a pattern of behaviour.

Well before he ever tasted power, the young Aitken had displayed his curious unfitness for it. He was born with powerful connections and a persuasive manner, the great-nephew of the press baron Lord Beaverbrook. The mix of blue blood and printer's ink in his veins conferred neither a sense of honour nor a respect for the facts.

While still an undergraduate at Oxford, he sought to avoid a particular examination by remarkable means. He bought a dozen oysters, left them for long hours on a heated radiator until they went bad and then swallowed the lot.

Having poisoned himself in this way, he was able convincingly to feign a sudden attack of a mysterious illness and so avoid the examination while winning sympathy. Friends who subsequently reminded him of this ruse were always met with denials.

"It was remarkable," remembered one who followed him into politics. "He refused to recognise the difference between his fictions and reality."

This detachment from the truth mirrored a certain detachment from others. When Aitken was three, he was found to be suffering from tuberculosis of the lungs, which had spread to his bones. He



Michael Gove confesses that he was among those dazzled by Jonathan Aitken and is now left to grieve for the man that might have been

spent much of the next three years of his life immobilised in plaster, strapped to his bed. During his painful early childhood, his mother was often absent, nursing his father, who had been badly injured while on RAF duty during the war.

The peculiar isolation of his early years, according to friends, led him to keep others at an emotional distance. He was to have relationships with a succession of attractive women. He squired Margaret Thatcher's daughter Carol, Lady Antonia Fraser and Arianna Stassinopoulos, as well as conducting an affair with a prostitute who specialised in sado-masochism and fathering a child by Soraya Khushoggi, ex-wife of the arms dealer Adnan. He has said that he did not know the prostitute's profession.

This remarkable rake's progress from Holland Park to Soho by way of Annabel's was indicative of a man for whom commitment was a curse, and fidelity, like so much else, a fiction.

Aitken's sexual conquests were, however, just pistons on his political journey. Offered a safe Tory seat while still an undergraduate, he lost the opportunity to enter Parliament while still in his twenties after another episode of deceit.

In 1969, while candidate for Thirsk and Malton, he was handed a secret report by a local army officer that revealed the complicity of the Labour Government in the Nigerian

civil war. When he was confronted by his informant with the consequences of his exposing the information, Aitken sought to blame his friend and mentor, the Tory MP Hugh Fraser, for the leak.

Unfortunately for Aitken, the officer whose report he had leaked tape-recorded this conversation and his deceit was revealed during a trial under the Official Secrets Act.

Aitken argued that he had been guilty only of "private verbal subtleties". That was enough to secure his acquittal in court. But a habit of ducking the truth when in trouble had been confirmed.

Aitken eventually entered Parliament in 1974, for Thanet in Kent. He made amends of a sort for his treatment of Hugh Fraser by running his friend's campaign for the Tory leader-

"It's to be hoped that, having lost so much, he has found those things he has always seemed to lack — a conscience and inner peace"

ship. That quixotic act recommended Aitken to new friends, but not to the victor of the leadership contest, Margaret Thatcher. Her poor opinion of Aitken was confirmed by his treatment of her daughter.

He was left to deploy his undoubted talents on the back-

benches. An early and principled Euroscepticism, and a championing of freedom of information, won him deserved plaudits across the political divide. His eloquence in defence of causes when they were unpopular showed what might have been, if he had been free

of his demons. Deprived of power, Aitken sought riches, and he did so in the moral quicksands of the Middle East. Although money flowed to him like oil, it also left a stain on his reputation in the eyes of the fastidious.

Those reservations, however, did not stop politicians and journalists, myself included, accepting the hospitality of his salon in Lord North Street.

Aitken presided over meetings of the Conservative Philosophy Group in his impressive drawing room with an easy élan, encouraging younger members to joust with the party's grave seniors.

I was charmed by his manner, impressed by his intelligence and dismissive of his critics. His dazzling performance blinded me to the darkness within. I am left to grieve for the man that might have been.

I was not alone in being taken in. John Major sought to repair what he considered Baroness Thatcher's myopic neglect by elevating Aitken to the Cabinet.

Once there, he was tipped for the leadership by normally judicious observers. He clearly enjoyed office, and allowed it to show through his normal reserve. But what lies behind that smile?

Journalistic diligence undid him. That diligence may have been tinged with sharp practice, but it was no sharper than Aitken had practised himself. Since his disgrace, his friends attest that he has found a peace of sorts in Christianity, after attending an "Alpha" course in the faith. It is to be hoped that having lost so much, he has found those things he has always seemed to lack — a conscience and inner peace.

Aitken bailed

Continued from page 1
ters Victoria and Alexandra, 18, and a son, William, 16.
Judge Hyam renewed bail on condition that Aitken remained at his London residence, surrendered his passport and should not travel in England and Wales without first obtaining permission.

Although she was named in the conspiracy charges, Mrs Aitken, who is now believed to be living in Belgrade, has not been brought before the courts. Victoria Aitken, 18, has been interviewed by detectives; a decision was taken by the Crown Prosecution Service last August not to prosecute her.

The two charges to which Aitken pleaded guilty are: ☐ Perjury: on a day between June 4 and 14, 1997, having been lawfully sworn as a witness in a judicial proceeding...

...in which he was plaintiff and Peter Preston, David Palfrey, Guardian Newspapers and Granada Television Ltd were defendants, willfully made a statement material in that proceedings, which he knew to be false, namely that on September 19, 1993 his wife Lolita Aitken was in Paris and paid to the Ritz hotel the sum of Fr4,257 in part payment of his bill at that hotel.

☐ Doing acts tending and intended to pervert the course of public justice: in that he drafted a witness statement in the name of Victoria Aitken and obtained the signature of Victoria Aitken to that statement dated June 17, 1997. The said statement contained a version of events which he knew to be false, namely that Victoria Aitken and Lolita Aitken had travelled by ferry and train to Paris on September 16, 1993, and stayed overnight in the flat of the daughter of Said Ayas. The statement was submitted to the High Court.

Peace offer that could have saved his skin

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

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The irony that will torment him, however, as he awaits sentence is that he turned down the offer of a peace deal from *The Guardian* before the general election, in which Aitken knew that he was struggling to hold on to his Thirsk constituency.

He was offered a "walk away" compromise in which the case would be settled out of court and each side would pay its own costs.

Reliable sources said that at the centre of the deal was the advertising company chief Maurice Saatchi (later Lord Saatchi), an adviser to the Tories and the man who was preparing John Major's last advertising campaign. He had made the suggestion both to Aitken and Alan Rusbridger, editor of *The Guardian*.

A lunch was arranged, but at the last minute the Aitkens withdrew, maintaining that it would compromise his position to meet Mr Rusbridger. The lunch went ahead without him, and Mr Rusbridger told Mr Saatchi that the newspaper's evidence would destroy Aitken, even though *The Guardian's* lawyers knew that they were in legal difficulty.

The Editor's suggestion was that a statement could be agreed between the two parties for publication after the election and that each side would pay its own costs — then estimated at £200,000. Mr Saatchi reported back to Aitken, but the MP was determined to have his day in court — for which he was to pay handsomely when his case collapsed.

The evidence that he lied about his "family weekend" at the Ritz in Paris with his wife and daughter was put forward by Wendy Harris of British Airways' security and investigation service.

She said that Mrs Aitken had flown directly from Heathrow to Geneva, so alleging that she could not have paid the £1,000 bill at the Ritz, as her husband testified.

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But the ignominy has continued to beset him since — his assets have been frozen and his living allowance restricted to £9,000 a month, out of which he has had to pay for the education of his three children. Aitken had wanted to transfer assets, including the couple's ten-bedroom Georgian house in Westminster and land in Australia, to his wife, Lolita, who divorced him last year.

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On the long road to his downfall, Aitken avoided being jailed for contempt last October over his unpaid £2 million legal bill after his failed libel action. A notice of motion committing him to jail had been withdrawn by the media outlets after he submitted an affidavit detailing his assets.

But the ignominy has continued to beset him since — his assets have been frozen and his living allowance restricted to £9,000 a month, out of which he has had to pay for the education of his three children. Aitken had wanted to transfer assets, including the couple's ten-bedroom Georgian house in Westminster and land in Australia, to his wife, Lolita, who divorced him last year.

On the way to his nadir, however, he principally lost the glittering career that had once made him the one of the brightest stars in the Tory firmament.

Peace offer that could have saved his skin

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

SINCE resigning 34 years ago from John Major's Cabinet to take up his mission, armed only with the "simple sword of truth" ... to cut out the cancer of bent and twisted journalism, Jonathan Aitken has lost his political career, his marriage and much of his fortune.

The irony that will torment him, however, as he awaits sentence is that he turned down the offer of a peace deal from *The Guardian* before the general election, in which Aitken knew that he was struggling to hold on to his Thirsk constituency.

He was offered a "walk away" compromise in which the case would be settled out of court and each side would pay its own costs.

Reliable sources said that at the centre of the deal was the advertising company chief Maurice Saatchi (later Lord Saatchi), an adviser to the Tories and the man who was preparing John Major's last advertising campaign. He had made the suggestion both to Aitken and Alan Rusbridger, editor of *The Guardian*.

A lunch was arranged, but at the last minute the Aitkens withdrew, maintaining that it would compromise his position to meet Mr Rusbridger. The lunch went ahead without him, and Mr Rusbridger told Mr Saatchi that the newspaper's evidence would destroy Aitken, even though *The Guardian's* lawyers knew that they were in legal difficulty.

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Judges free man jailed for 14 years

Corruption charges against Yard detectives lead to appeal ruling, reports Stewart Tandler

A MAN serving 14 years in prison for armed robbery was freed by the Court of Appeal yesterday as a result of criminal charges brought against Scotland Yard detectives.

George Ellis, 37, from East London, had claimed during his trial that a Flying Squad officer had planted false evidence against him.

The court was told that 25 members of the same squad — who cannot be named for legal reasons — could no longer be witnesses in the case because they had either been charged or suspended, or would have been suspended if they had not retired. None of those charged had yet been tried. More members of the unit might be tainted by the allegations and would risk cross-examination if used as witnesses.

Mr Ellis was cleared of taking part in a £37,500 robbery three years ago. One of the 25 police officers charged was a key officer in Mr Ellis's trial.

John Kelsey-Fry, for the Crown, told the court that new evidence had emerged from two former members of the squad who were now helping Scotland Yard's drive against corruption. As a result, the Crown would not fight the appeal. The two informers would



George Ellis with his son Georgie. He said yesterday: "I am devastated by what has happened and I plan to sue"

eventually be witnesses. None of the corruption allegations had been proved but at the moment the Crown could not use the 25 as witnesses of truth. He said the prolonged investigations into the allegations of dishonesty would take time but it would be wrong to delay Mr Ellis's appeal.

The court was told that Mr Ellis, who was cleared of another armed robbery charge by the court eight years ago,

was convicted largely on the evidence that DNA tests showed that a sample of his saliva matched saliva traces on a bandana worn by a robber.

Stephen Kamlish, for Mr Ellis, said at the trial that there were allegations that the saliva had been planted on the bandana. The officer was called from another part of London to collect the saliva. He went on his own to do a routine job normally done by

a non-specialist officer. At the trial he could not explain why he had been called. Mr Kamlish said: "It raises the suspicion he was up to no good."

Quashing Mr Ellis's conviction, Lord Justice Rose, sitting with Mr Justice Maurice Kay and Sir Patrick Russell, said that the Flying Squad officer now charged was "a highly material witness" in the trial.

The saliva was found in a bag thrown away by one of the

robbers with £34,000 of the cash. The other £3,500 has never been recovered. Police said one of the robbers escaped with the cash. He was arrested later. The defence claimed the police took the money.

Lord Rose said the officer who collected the saliva had now been charged with dishonesty. Mr Ellis had suggested he had planted the saliva. In the light of subsequent events the conviction could no longer

be upheld. Lord Rose said. There was no suggestion there should be a retrial. The court ordered a retrial for Tony Zomparelli, 34, convicted with Mr Ellis and jailed for 12 years.

Outside court, Mr Ellis called on Scotland Yard to scrap the Flying Squad. He said he had been wrongly convicted twice and sentenced to a total of 27 years in prison. "I am devastated by what has happened and I plan to sue."

Lightning hit twice for 'vendetta victim'

By Stewart Tandler, Crime Correspondent

GEORGE ELLIS might have felt a sense of déjà vu yesterday as he left the Court of Appeal after being freed from his 14-year jail sentence. Eight years ago the court quashed another armed robbery conviction against him also brought by Scotland Yard's Flying Squad.

Mr Ellis, who has been on bail since last autumn, believes that he was the victim of a police vendetta and corruption. He admits that he is no angel: he had started a career of crime by the age of 11. But his only record for armed robbery was 18 years ago and he pleaded guilty.

His present troubles began in 1987 when he was arrested near the scene of an £8,000 bank robbery. His first trial collapsed after the jury was given copies of papers used by his lawyer including his record. The second trial went ahead and he was jailed for seven years before his lawyers were told that an officer's prints had been found on the papers. In 1991 he won an appeal.

"I thought that after that there was no way they would come after me," he said. Then 2½ years ago he was arrested in Woodford, East London, four miles from the scene of a £37,500 robbery.

The case rested on saliva samples matched to a bandana worn by one of the robbers. He claimed the sample could have been smeared on the bandana.

Once again there was retrial. This time someone had walked past two of the first jury and told them they should acquit. Mr Ellis claims the police wanted to stop the trial because his case was going too well. At a second trial he and two other men were convicted.

Inside prison, Mr Ellis heard of the first arrests by Scotland Yard in its anti-corruption drive and asked his lawyer to check whether any of the officers in his case were involved. Nine months later he was told the Crown Prosecution Service would not fight an appeal. One of the officers faced corruption charges.

Mr Ellis, of Bethnal Green, East London, said: "I am sick. I have served 2½ years for something I have not done. I have no confidence in the corruption drive. Give it a couple of years and they will still be up to the same thing."

Bristol inquiry 'is not a trial'

By Ian Murray, Medical Correspondent

AN INQUIRY into the high death rate among child heart patients at Bristol Royal Infirmary is intended to identify minimum acceptable standards for operations and best practice for carrying them out.

Ian Kennedy, the inquiry chairman, said: "It will not be a trial. We are not seeking to apportion blame. We are aiming to discover what happened in Bristol, why it happened, and seeing if there are lessons to be learned which will benefit the NHS as a whole."

The inquiry was ordered by Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, after a General Medical Council hearing severely criticised two surgeons for continuing to perform complex operations on babies — even though they knew too many of them were dying.

The chief executive of the hospital trust, who was also a doctor, was condemned for failing to use his authority to stop

the operations, although he had been alerted to what was happening.

The GMC hearing was restricted to 59 cases of babies on whom two types of operation were performed between February 1988 and January 1995. The public inquiry is to examine hundreds of operations of different types performed on infants between 1984 and 1995.

The GMC struck off James Wisheart, the senior consultant, and John Roylance, chief executive of the hospital trust. Jahardan Dhasmana, the other consultant surgeon, was banned from operating on children for three years and was later dismissed from his job.

Mr Roylance, the only one of the three to appeal against the GMC decision, yesterday lost an attempt to force the council to hand over a transcript of the private deliberations between members about the case.

Smear test errors 'hit confidence'


By Richard Duce

PUBLIC confidence in cancer screening for women has been dented by blunders at a Kent hospital which falsely gave the all-clear to hundreds of patients, a professor told the High Court yesterday.

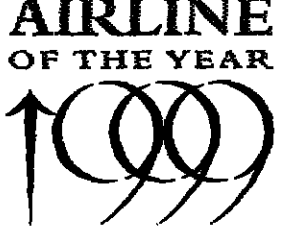
Thomas Krausz was called as an expert witness for three women who developed cancer and are now infertile after screeners at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital failed to notice abnormal cells during routine smear tests.

Professor Krausz, an honorary consultant at Hammer-smith Hospital in West London, said that after checking the slides himself he believed that the screeners should have spotted the abnormalities.

Sandra Penney, 36, Helen Palmer, 36, and Lesley Cannon, 39, are seeking to prove that the East Kent Health Authority is liable. The hearing at Canterbury continues today.




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Hague pledges to remake Tories

Conservative leader tells his party it must embrace the modern 'brassy Britain', writes Philip Webster

WILLIAM HAGUE promised last night to remould the Conservatives as a modern forward-looking alternative to new Labour that would avoid harking back to past glories and embrace the country as it is today and will be in the future.

In the most comprehensive statement he has given of his political philosophy, Mr Hague accepted that the Tories would have to take on and beat Labour on some of its most favoured territory if he was to achieve another "great Conservative revival".

The party faced a huge cultural change. "We must never be the nostalgia party. We must do more than grudgingly accept Britain here and now: we must celebrate it."

Outlining for the first time the key policy areas that will be reviewed over the coming months as he attempts to present a new agenda for Britain, Mr Hague acknowledged that winning battles over efficiency and the economy would no longer be enough.

Instead the Conservatives would have to win battles over generosity, charity, compassion, tolerance, fairness, social institutions and the community, all areas that Tony Blair has claimed.

Mr Hague used his speech to the right-wing Centre for Policy Studies to flesh out his credo of the British Way, which he claimed was threatened by Mr Blair's Third Way philosophy. "The Prime Minister is in effect holding a dagger

at the heart of what it is to be British," he said. "If he is left to carry on unchecked he will drive it right through that heart."

The task of the Tories was to offer the British a people an alternative — "a British way for the 21st century that is founded on the experiences of the British people, a British way that builds on what is strong about Britain rather than trying to rebrand us or turn us into something else."

But to succeed the Tories had to embrace the Britain of the future. "Not just the sleepy villages, polite manners, friendly vicars and novels of Scott and Austen that have always been Britain," they had

'We must never be the nostalgia party ... we must celebrate Britain here and now'

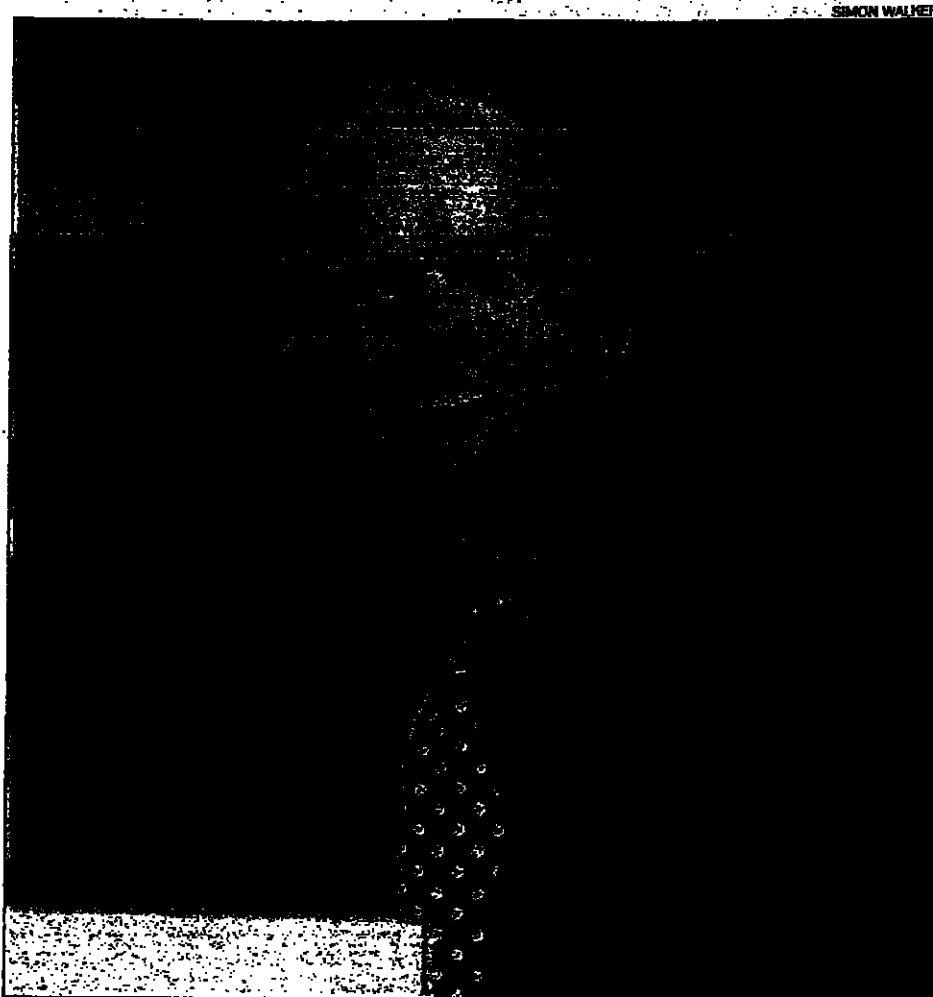
to embrace the Britain of "big industrial cities and housing estates, the Britain proud of its world-class designers and good restaurants, the Britain where hundreds of thousands go to the Notting Hill carnival and the Eisteddfod, the Britain which watches MTV and

Changing Rooms, and which is fascinated by Ricky and Bianca's ups and downs, the Britain which turns to the sports pages before the political news, where more people go on holiday to Florida than to Bournemouth, the Britain in other words that has always been Britain too — urban, ambitious, sporty, fashion-conscious, multi-ethnic, brassy, self-confident and international."

He raised the fear that under Mr Blair people would wake up and "find themselves living in what feels to be a different country."

"People did not elect a Labour Government because they wanted to make Britain into a foreign country. But the impact of the Blair agenda will make people strangers in their own land — with an alien voting system and Parliament and an overmighty state."

The Tories are preparing a preliminary new policy programme, *Agenda for Britain*, for later this year. Mr Hague made plain that it would cover areas such as the constitution, including proposals to reduce the powers of Scottish MPs at Westminster after devolution; Europe, where it would come out against any further transfers of power and sovereignty from Britain to outdated European institutions; and a fundamental review of the welfare state favouring families and reducing dependency on it. There would also be new policies on education to give choice to schools and parents



William Hague told the Tories that they faced huge cultural change to beat Labour

and "get central government off the back of teachers", on health where the aim would be to get more doctors and nurses into a modern health service, and the next stage of the "enterprise revolution" in which the Tories would again try to free business from over-regulation from Europe and the state.

Attacking Mr Blair's plans, Mr Hague said British identity could not be treated like

"some passing fad that can be repackaged, rebranded or simply consigned to the dustbin. It is my profound belief that if the Conservative Party is not in touch with the identity and values of the British people then it cannot be authentically Conservative. The British people came to think that the Conservatives had lost touch with them. They felt that in important areas of our national life we had become detached from the British Way."

He asserted that Labour was reversing the Tory enterprise revolution and heralding the return of the big state as an enemy of Britain's enterprise spirit.

Leading article, page 19

...but begs the big questions

The leader of the Conservative Party is better at describing what he dislikes than what he wants. His lecture had enough crudity to intrigue the punditocracy and enough soundbites to satisfy the headline writers. But his case was, in the end, unsatisfactorily elusive.

William Hague mounted a powerful case against Blairism. But his alternative of the British Way begged the main questions about the future direction of Britain — its relations with Europe, the balance of the constitution and the size and structure of the public sector. He sought to be trendy rather than traditional. There was none of the wistful nostalgia in which John Major occasionally indulged.

Mr Hague was speaking for Tories born in the 1960s rather than the 1930s of many party members. He is right that if the Tories "are to be champions of the British Way", they would have to win battles that would present

"as big a challenge as anything we faced in the 1970s". But Margaret Thatcher's personality gave the Tories a more distinct identity than Mr Hague started with the enduring values that bind Britain together, rejecting the arguments of historians such as Linda Colley that Britain was brought together in the 18th century by particular circumstances and pressures that may now be ending. However, several times when Mr Hague talked about Britain, he seemed to be meaning England, despite his special political and marital understanding of Wales.

The constitution is at the heart of the Hague thesis. He portrayed Tony Blair as "holding a dagger at the heart of

what it is to be British". Surfactant and alarmist rhetoric aside, the real question is the inevitability of the process of change.

Mr Hague is right that "it is not inevitable because devolution is a reality. Scottish independence will follow", even though many of his colleagues think separation is bound to happen. But he has said nothing about how to satisfy Scottish aspirations within the Union.

Mr Hague raised the spectre of English nationalism as "a sinister and uncontrollable force", the threat that is more feared than secession. The Tories are right that the Government has so far ignored the English dimension. But their own answers have been incoherent and confused. The Tories have apparently been more

clear-cut on Europe by opposing entry into a single currency. But their statement about keeping in Europe, but not being run by Europe, means little

in practice. Saying we should be "distinct from the Continent and say no to further transfers of power and sovereignty to outdated European institutions" dodges the central question. The rest of Europe does not regard them as outdated.

So would Mr Hague be willing to see Britain as an increasingly remote planet in the European solar system? Would we, in practice, have to renegotiate our membership?

Conservative spokesmen such as David Willetts and Ann Widdecombe have begun to hint at how they would change the schools and the NHS, but they need to be bolder. We still do not have much idea of what Hague's Britain would be like.

Peter RIDDLELL
ON POLITICS

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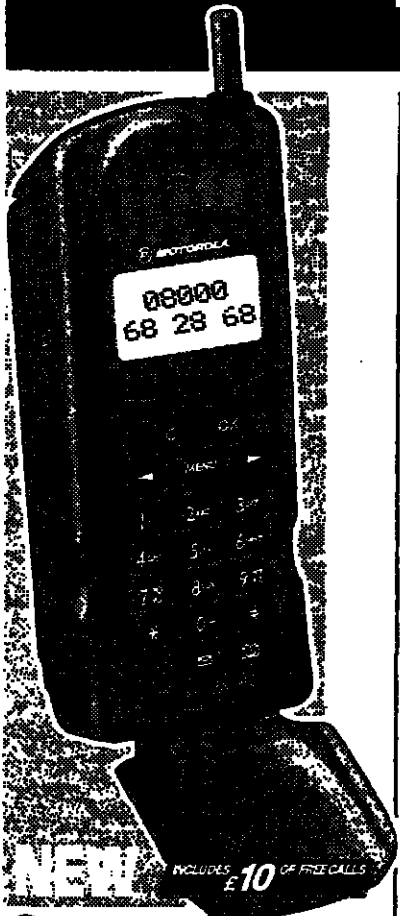
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سكاي ديجيتال

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY JANUARY 20 1999



The spring look from M&S: from left, cotton-stretch polo neck and trousers with raincoat; wool-stripe jacket and trousers; gypsy top and drawstring trousers; and cotton top with short-sleeve shirt

Double Dutch show in the dark

FROM LISA ARMSTRONG, FASHION EDITOR, IN PARIS

IN A scene could have been straight out of *Prêt-à-Porter*, Robert Altman's celluloid satire, the young Dutch fashion duo Viktor and Rolf presented their couture collection in the dark.

It might seem perverse to show clothes, which live or die by their hand-worked details, by ultraviolet spotlight. The ruse highlighted the white clothes beautifully (and the lint on the audience's attire) but left the black entirely obscured. Viktor and Rolf, who came to the catwalks via art school, are self-styled conceptual couturiers. Their last collection, featuring huge neck pillows that made the models look like Quasimodo on a bad-posture day, was entitled *Atomic Chic*.

Concepts are best confined to art galleries and philosophy degrees. However, "The Concept", such as it was (and I think it all boiled down to black and white, paled into insignificance when the models began coming out again, but this time with the lights on. Out they all trotted, the Tuxedo, the Dodge Priest, the Holy Hunter character from *The Piano* and, inevitably, given the ultraviolet, the Skeleton.

Cruel to mock, as Viktor and Rolf can cut an interesting suit, and beneath the concepts there is talent.



One of Viktor and Rolf's creations shown in Paris

Higher marks for some extra sparks

Susie Steiner sees M&S begin its fightback with designs for a brighter spring

CITY analysts were among guests at a fashion show yesterday as Marks & Spencer sought to reverse the downturn in its fortunes with the launch of its new spring and summer collection. The range is titled *Fresh Start*.

The low-key showing took place at the firm's central London headquarters in a brightly-lit, boutique-style room where clothes hung from lonely metal rails while the bar served coffee with not a little portion of humble pie for past mistakes.

"I think our core customer has perceived that we have let her down,"

said Martin Kemp, who took up his role as commercial executive of knitwear and sportswear this week, having been moved from his previous position as head of lingerie — Marks & Spencer's most successful department, which secures 40 per cent of Britain's underwear market.

"I hope what we have done, after much internal reflection, is learnt a lot of lessons and applied them to this spring range," he added. "We are setting out to sell more goods

this spring than last year." Customers may have complained of poor service, badly displayed merchandise, overpricing and a drop in the product quality on which the firm built its name, but Mr Kemp's own view is that the firm's autumn collection failed on colour, with too much grey and black. Its aim this summer is to redress the imbalance.

Yesterday the rails burst with flashes of fuchsia and turquoise in large patterns on retro-style floaty

resses. The look seemed more Margot in *The Good Life* than Twiggy in *Vogue*, but the question of serving different generations simultaneously is another problem that Mr Kemp aims to tackle.

After two years of rapid growth, resulting in 290 M&S stores nationwide, Marks & Spencer has suffered a pummeling over the past six months. The troubled high street chain suffered critically poor trading over the Christmas period and is-

sued its first profits warning last week. The firm's shares fell to a six-year low as analysts cut their profit forecasts by as much as £200 million.

Marks & Spencer remains dogged by an awkward straddling of the generations, with its middle-aged customers complaining of too much pandering to teenage fashion while the young still steer clear of its mumsy image. Attempts at military combat trousers and utility sports-

wear have floundered in a confusion of age and cut which attempts to please all and ends up pleasing nobody.

Mr Kemp said: "We didn't get rid of products for 40 to 50-year-olds, but the problem was they couldn't find them properly because we put the fashion-based, up-to-the-minute products at the front."

Spring and summer will see the Marks & Spencer success stories return — the reliable staples such as T-shirts, pyjamas and underwear in bright whites and pretty blues, which it does so well.

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final purchase payment, retail customers only, typical example: monthly payments £171.23, mileage pa 12,000, deposit £4,550, balance £8,450, total credit charges £1,634 (including finance facility fee of £70 payable with first monthly payment, further charges may be excluding metallic paint + £250, the seven organising publications of the "Car Of The Year 1999" award are vi blagere, am, autocar, l'automobile magazine, autopesa, stern, autovisio.

French salute a four-legged hero

Ben Macintyre tells how the Nazis executed an army horse that dealt one of their soldiers a mortal blow

A HORSE that was executed by a Nazi firing squad in 1940 after it kicked a German soldier to death has won belated recognition as an equine hero of the Resistance.

The exploits of Iris XVI, a swift and ill-tempered mount that had belonged to General Philippe Leclerc, the liberator of Paris in 1944, are celebrated in the latest issue of *Le Casseur*, journal of the Saint-Cyr military academy, France's equivalent of Sandhurst.

In the years before the war, Iris XVI (a gelding, despite the name) was widely considered the most unruly horse in the army, as well as one of the ugliest, with "a long back, a shambling gait and straggling tail".

"He looked more like a working horse than a cavalry mount," one Saint-Cyrien said. Despite the animal's appearance and temperament, the chestnut was the favoured mount of Philippe de Hautecloque, a Saint-Cyr instructor who later would use the pseudonym Leclerc to prevent reprisals against his family when he joined General de Gaulle in London to rally the Free French.

Iris XVI gained a reputation as a winner among the military horse-racing fraternity, repeatedly beating more favoured and elegant horses on the track, but it remained remarkably untamed and in

1936 threw the future General Leclerc, breaking his leg in two places and leaving him with a permanent limp.

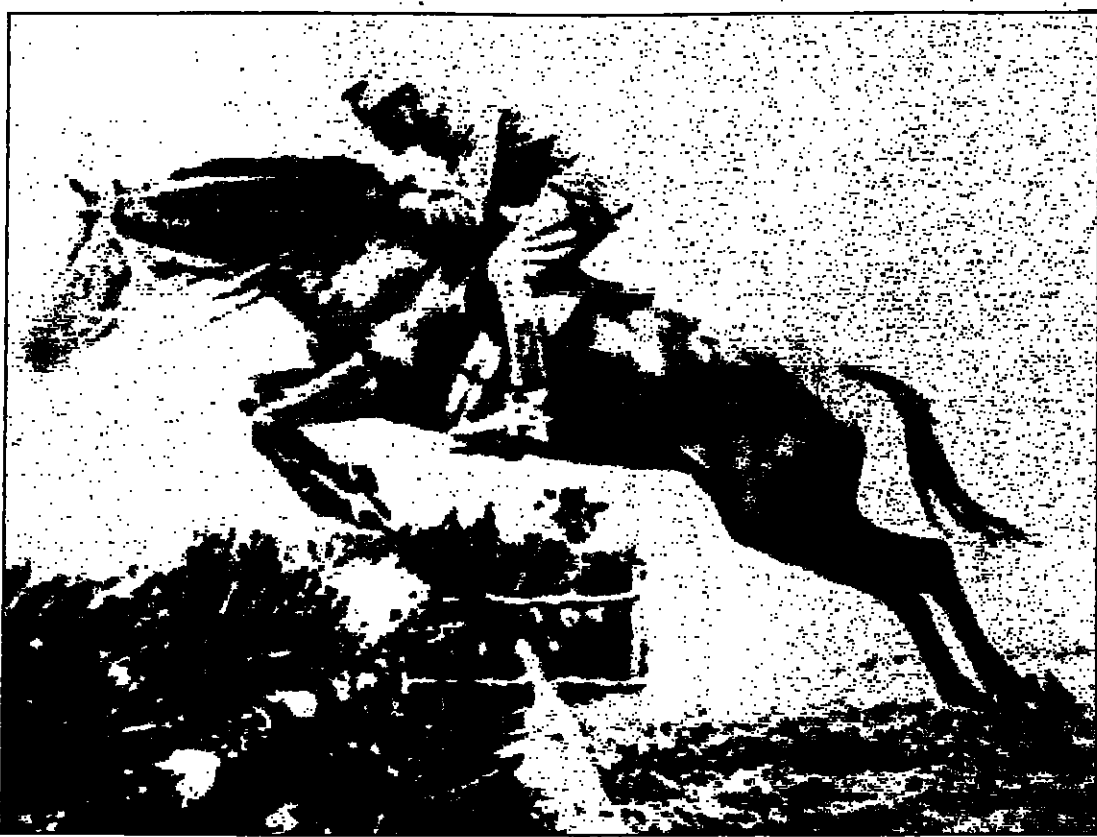
In 1939, when other horses were mobilised for war, Iris XVI was left behind because it was "considered too precious, or too dangerous". Armand de Vasselot de Régné, a contemporary of General Leclerc at Saint-Cyr, writes.

On June 14, 1940, the Saint-Cyr stables were occupied by a German cavalry unit of the invading Nazi army, whose commander summoned one of the stablehands. "Monsieur, you have in your stables an excellent horse named Iris XVI. This horse beat my horse in a race at the hippodrome. I want to see this horse. Go and fetch it," the German commander ordered.

The stablehand is said to have replied, whether out of fear or calculation: "I know which his box is, why not give me one of your soldiers and he can take him out?"

The luckless German soldier was handed a bridle and shown to Iris XVI's stable, but, as M de Régné records, "when he opened the door, Iris XVI let loose a massive kick and killed him stone dead".

The enraged German officer ordered a swift reprisal. "Put this horse up against a wall. Bring me 12 men. This horse will be shot," he said.



The future General Leclerc riding Iris XVI while still a Saint-Cyr instructor before the war and, right, in Paris after the liberation in 1944



Iris XVI was shot minutes later. The horse has no record of grave, leaving open the unpleasant possibility that the champion racer and *résistant* may have been eaten.

General Leclerc, leaning on the walking stick that was Iris XVI's legacy to him, entered Paris in triumph alongside de Gaulle four years after the execution of his favourite horse.

The indomitable animal was also remembered fondly by other graduates of Saint-Cyr, including one Captain de La Horie, a renowned horseman and officer in the Second Armoured Division. De la Horie was killed during the attack on Strasbourg in November 1944. The vehicle in which he died had, painted across the top of its windscreen, the

name of another hero who died for France: Iris XVI. □ Bangkok: France has bestowed the Légion d'honneur, its most prestigious decoration, on a 99-year-old Thai veteran of the First World War, the French Embassy here said yesterday.

Gérard Coste, the French Ambassador to Thailand, pinned the medal on the chest

of Yod Sangrungruang in Phitsanulok, 208 miles north of Bangkok on Monday, the embassy said.

The veteran is the sole surviving member of the 1,284 Thai soldiers who served in the European theatre as part of the Royal Thai Expeditionary Force. He worked as an aircraft mechanic with the French armed forces.

To commemorate the eightieth anniversary of the end of the war, France has been conferring the Légion d'honneur on all surviving Allied veterans as a way of honouring those who fought on its soil to defeat the German Army.

After the war, Yod returned to Thailand, where in due course he became a village headman. (AP)

Chubais libel claim rejected

FROM ANNA BLUNDY IN MOSCOW

ONE of the chief architects of Russia's much-criticised privatisation programme, Anatoli Chubais, who is a member of the right-wing coalition set to oppose the Communists and extreme nationalists in the coming elections, has lost his libel case against Sergei Daryenko, a newspaper and political interviewer.

In his weekly review of the news, Mr Daryenko teased Mr Chubais about the \$90,000 (£35,000) advance he had received from a friend and supposed co-author of a planned book on privatisation. He had television auditions in stitches with his jokes against the unpopular Chubais, who is widely held to be partly responsible for the unpleasant shock of market reform.

Mr Chubais sued for libel, demanding 5 million roubles from OKT, the television company, and 500,000 roubles from Mr Daryenko. The regional court found in favour of Mr Daryenko last October. Mr Chubais appealed to the Moscow City Court, which on Monday upheld the original decision.

Stasi file handover sparks mole-hunt

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

THE most comprehensive mole-hunt in the recent history of the German spy service is to begin thanks to an exchange of intelligence between the Central Intelligence Agency and the German authorities.

True, the moles may now be a bit long in the tooth — some of the newly available data relates to Cold War agents from the 1970s — but for the first time spycatchers will be able to lay bare how deeply the East German Stasi penetrated the defences of the West.

Next month Sandy Berger, the National Security Adviser, will hand over to a German emissary a suitcase containing the microfilmed archives of the foreign espionage department (HVA) of the Stasi. The CIA bought the archive in 1989 in an operation codenamed Rosewood soon after the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

The files contain the real names of all the sources and officers who reported to Markus Wolf, the East German spy-master. The Germans have been pressing the Americans

for the information ever since. Only recently did the German spy service (BND) receive a copy of the names of the 1,900 East German agents operating in West Germany. But there is much more to come.

The CIA relented only when two former East German computer technicians cracked the code of four magnetic tapes containing reports from all East German spies abroad between 1969 and 1987. The reports were held by the Gauck Agency, which is in charge of secret police archives.

Now a trade has been arranged, there should be some clarity about the killing last year of the commander of the Swiss Guard — there was speculation that it was linked to East German infiltration at the Vatican. Persistent rumours about Stasi contacts with the Labour Party in the early 1980s and Social Democratic parties throughout Europe will be tested also.

Not a good time, in short, for agents enjoying their retirement on the golf course.

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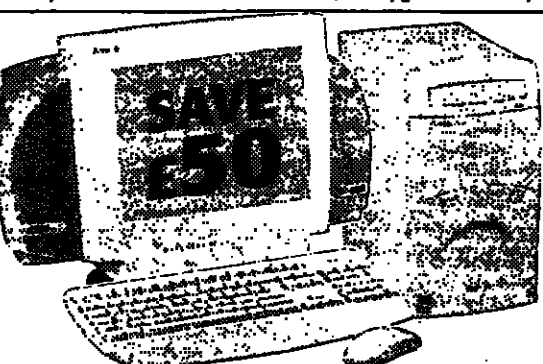
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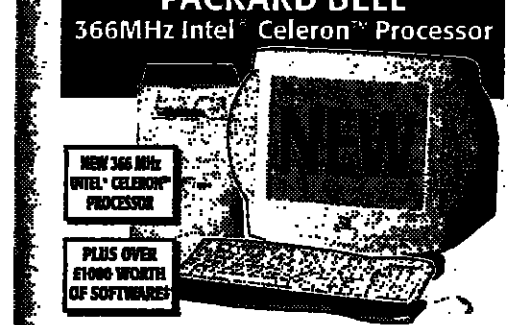


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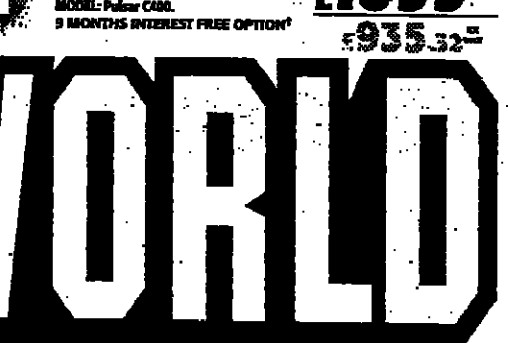


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Joy in the rain as Hussein returns home

By Christopher Walker
in Amman

JORDAN gave way to euphoria yesterday as King Hussein returned home from a six-month cancer cure to resume control of the desert kingdom he has ruled for 47 years.

Up to a million Jordanians lined the streets of the rain-soaked capital to greet the man known by diplomats as PLK (Plucky Little King) as he braved wintry weather to wave from the open top of a white Mercedes.

Some Jordanians, maintaining Beduin custom, slaughtered sheep and camels in the King's honour. Others sat in tents heated by smoky wood-burners and filled with patriotic bagpipe music. Loudspeakers lined a route lit with fairy-lights and festooned with giant portraits of the 63-year-old

monarch and his wife, Queen Noor. Shopkeepers offered trays of sweetmeats and cardamom-laced coffee to passers-by.

Munir Abdul Samad, 42, an English teacher, pointed to a camel squatting on the back of a white pickup truck. "We have brought the animal 150 miles to kill it here to show His Majesty how much we love him and how we have missed him like a father," he said.

The teacher, his head swathed in a red and white keffiyeh, added: "It is truly miraculous. For nearly a year, we had no rain. Now, within hours of the King addressing us on Saturday night, it has rained almost non-stop. It shows even the heavens are determined to welcome him."

From the atmosphere along the 15-mile route of the royal motorcade, the country might

just have won the World Cup, or even a war. "I can tell you what you see is genuine, heart-felt feeling," Mr Samad said. "Without the King we were all frightened what might happen to our country."

Many were anxious to see how the King looked after six months of chemotherapy in the US for non-Hodgkins lymphoma. Doctors have announced him cured after treatment which also included a transplant of his own bone marrow and blood transfusions from close relatives.

The King — the world's longest-serving executive ruler — piloted his own jet home. Somehow he appeared to have gained strength since being helped towards the plane in London by his American-born wife only hours earlier.

In a symbolic gesture that will have appealed even to his



King Hussein, watched by Queen Noor, is embraced by his brother, Crown Prince Hassan, after arriving home in Amman yesterday

Islamic fundamentalist enemies, the King's first act was to kneel and pray towards Mecca on a red and black mat laid out on the sodden runway.

Then he met Arab notables, including the President of Yem-

en, the Emir of Qatar, the Crown Prince of Morocco and Bahrain, and Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader.

Throughout the day, Jordan Television relayed film of the King's reign, which began

when he was 17, not long after his grandfather, King Abdullah, was assassinated in front of him in Jerusalem.

Banners stretched in a forest across the wide boulevards of Amman proclaimed: "You re-

turn like the soul to the body." The excitement was reinforced by the fact that 80 per cent of Jordanians have never known another ruler and have a rapport with the King.

"The simple fact is that we love the man and we admire him," said Naim Mulek, a Jordanian Christian of Palestinian origin. "We want to show you how happy we are he is well."

The King said yesterday that there was "much to be done". He has promised to introduce a series of reforms before he returns in two months to the Mayo clinic in Minnesota for what is described as a routine check-up. The planned reforms include a rooting out of corruption.

He has also told close aides that he plans to convene a family council to deal with the future of the Hashemite dynas-

ty. There is speculation that he wants Prince Hamzah, his 18-year-old son by Queen Noor, to succeed him, rather than his brother, Crown Prince Hassan bin Talal, 51, his designated successor.

A palace official said: "His Majesty, a strong believer with a deep sense of faith in God's will, has confronted life and death, during those difficult days [of his cure]. It naturally rekindled a wish to seek posterity through passing the succession to one of his sons."

Two Israeli air force F16 fighters provided an honorary escort for King Hussein as he piloted himself over Israeli air space. Israel's Defence Ministry said the planes met the King's plane 50 miles outside Israel's waters above the Mediterranean Sea. (AP)

Leading article, page 15

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Travel agent denies Miss World rape

Ramleh: An Israeli travel agent has denied raping Linor Abargil, the 19-year-old Israeli model who is Miss World, saying: "I didn't do this dirty thing."

A court here yesterday ordered that Shlomo Nour, 43, be held until January 31 pending an Israeli police inquiry into the alleged rape outside Milan on October 6.

Mr Nour, who was arrested at Tel Aviv airport on his return home this month, said: "I came to Israel on my own initiative. I didn't do this dirty thing. I didn't do this disgusting thing, and I am an innocent man."

Ms Abargil, who won the Miss World crown in November, alleges that the Egyptian-born Israeli, who ran a travel agency in Milan, raped her at

knife-point in his car after offering to drive her to Rome for a flight home.

Mr Nour claims that they had consensual sex in his Milan apartment. (Reuters)

Nour: claims Abargil consented to sex

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Seeking clues to natural cures

Mexico's flora could be nature's storehouse for remedies to many diseases. Anjana Ahuja reports

With its thick jungle and magnificent mountains, southern Mexico is one of nature's richest botanical gardens. The thousands of plants that flourish there — some grow nowhere else — have provided medicinal remedies for many centuries to the isolated Mayan people.

Now the Mayas are to let the world in on their secrets. Xenova, a British pharmaceutical company, together with scientists at the University of Georgia, are embarking on a project to document the flora in the politically troubled Mexican state of Chiapas.

Mayan doctors and healers will be interviewed to find out which plants they use to treat common ailments, such as tropical diseases.

The groundwork for the project has been laid over the past decade by a husband and wife team of anthropologists, Professor Brent Berlin and Dr Elio Ann Berlin, based at the University of Georgia. They have collected specimens of about 1,600 plants and recorded the ailments they supposedly cure. They also carried out health surveys on thousands of residents, as well as interviewing experts. The medical practices of the Mayas are so complex that the couple's findings about just one class of illness — gastrointestinal diseases — filled a 500-page book.

In 1997, realising the enormity of cataloguing other herbal remedies, Professor Berlin contacted Xenova, which is based in Slough, Berkshire. "It fitted in perfectly with what we do at Xenova. Discovery," says Dr Neil Robinson, head of analytical chemistry at the research arm of the company.

"We are interested in developing drugs from natural products, especially micro-organisms in plants, and we have collected samples from all over the world. One of the most familiar drugs, aspirin, was originally derived from willow bark, so there is a long tradition of treatments coming from natural sources."

"We were particularly interested because Chiapas is a mecca of biodiversity — it has thousands of plant species that are rare and perhaps don't grow anywhere else, and harbour organisms not found anywhere else."

Last month the Xenova was awarded a grant of £300,000 a year for five years by a consortium of organisations, including the National Institutes of Health in Washington, to pursue the scheme.

The two collaborators are approaching the project from slightly different angles. Both hope that Western medicine can benefit from Mayan medicinal expertise honed over centuries. The Mayas have potions for such diverse conditions as



Passing on a natural asset: women in the State of Chiapas in Mexico gather to practise their traditional medicine

diarrhoea, fractures, burns and mental disorders. One plant is even used as a means of birth control. Fungi are also popular. Pharmacological studies have shown at least some of these treatments to be effective — coyote bush leaves, undocumented in modern medical literature, work wonders for diarrhoea, while a cactus balm can soothe burns.

Xenova is hoping to uncover plants that can treat more serious illnesses, such as cancer. The company has gambled successfully before: a compound found in exotic soils, known only as XR9576, may have potential as an anti-cancer agent. For Professor Berlin, the project represents the chance to document traditions and practices that are in danger of disappearing, either be-

cause of the vanishing rainforest or because modern generations are turning to more orthodox medicine. "We want to convince the younger Mayas that it makes more sense to use the natural pharmacy in their backyard than spending good money on conventional medicine that does the same thing," Professor Berlin says.

There are estimated to be 9,000 plants of interest, each playing host to several micro-organisms. The most laborious and time-consuming aspect of the project will be the collection and identification of species; specially trained botanists from the area will aid the effort greatly.

Back in the laboratory, thousands of specimens can be scrutinised in a day. Cells are brought into contact with

plant extracts to see if the concentrate has any effect. "If you get an effect, you have to find out what in the extract is causing it," Dr Robinson explains. "That means separating and purifying each compound in the extract."

The next step is to find out which bit of the cell is targeted by the compound. At this stage, chemists will create hundreds of analogues — substances with very similar molecular structures — and then test them. This helps to home in on the chunk of the molecule responsible for the effect.

Dr Robinson adds: "This tweaking might also help to produce a compound that has the same biological action but fewer side-effects, or might make the substance easier to formulate into a drug. For

example, if a compound can be tweaked so it will dissolve in water, one can administer it as a tablet rather than as an injection, which is easier."

Conscious of accusations of bioprospecting — exploiting the biological treasures of another country for profit — Xenova and Professor Berlin plan to set up a trust in Chiapas, called PROMAYA, that will represent the community and receive royalties from any drugs that Xenova develops.

"The payoff will be considerable," Professor Berlin says. "We are not screening just any old plants. We are studying ones that have been used successfully by the Mayan people for generations. Whether we find a cure for AIDS or cancer is another question, but it's quite possible."

How the Mayas got high

The Mayas created one of the great civilisations in the pre-Columbian Central American jungle. Cities such as Tikal in Guatemala and Chichén Itzá in Yucatan amazed early explorers with their massive temple pyramids, striking stone sculptures and long inscriptions in hieroglyphics.

Deciphering the dates on these monuments showed that the Mayas reached their peak between AD200 and 900 — roughly coincident with the Roman and early Byzantine Empires — before undergoing a mysterious collapse that left most of their cities abandoned to the forest. Over the past century, hundreds of these cities have been found in Mexico, Guatemala and Belize.

Tikal is estimated to have housed 70,000 people. The urban core of more than a square mile included broad plazas linked by processional ways, and six large temples. One of these, excavated in the 1960s, covered the tomb of a powerful ruler known as Hasaw Kan K'awil, who died in AD734 after half a century fighting to preserve the independence of Tikal. Such real history is emerging rapidly from the decipherment of the hieroglyphs.

At the same time, investigation of Mayan culture's economic and social foundations is revealing how this tropical forest people developed and maintained a literate society for seven centuries in such an unlikely place. Pollen in swamp soils shows rainforest destruction by 2500BC and the start of cultivation. Excavations at the oldest known Mayan community, Cuiclé in northern Belize, showed that by 1200BC many of the foundations of Mayan life were already laid, including agriculture based on maize, beans and root crops such as cassava.

grown throughout the Amazon basin and Mexico. Maize was domesticated from teosinte in the highlands of Mexico in adapting it to the humid tropical lowlands, the Mayas showed a sophisticated understanding of the potential of plant foods. They exploited the forest fruits, including avocado and cacao. Mayan cacao groves were so productive that the Aztecs, who flourished half a millennium after the Maya went into decline, sent an expeditionary force to seize the orchards on the Pacific coast of Chiapas.

A popular drink was *balche*, a mead in which was steeped the bark of the *balche* tree. In one account, the jar was heated, and just before serving a toad was dropped in. The balche was released by its parotid glands as a powerful hallucinogen.

Mayan pottery vessels show that such drugs were also administered as incense, hypnosis, the masses caused by swallowing. Spanish sources after the 1542 conquest of Yucatan mention lands planted with wine trees, as well as the drunkenness of their new subjects. The Roman Catholic Church suppressed much Mayan plant lore.

In recent years, interest has revived: not just from scholars seeking explanations for the abundant depictions of plants in ancient Mayan sculptures and murals, but from those who believe that there is modern knowledge to be gained.

While searches such as Professor Berlin's may well give the world the basis for new drugs, local efforts such as the Panti Medicine Trail or the La Milpa research station in Belize are trying to bring knowledge of plants and their uses back to visitors and the Mayas themselves.

NORMAN HAMMOND

'Lands planted with wine trees' said the Spanish

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THE TIMES

SCIENTISTS FOR THE NEW CENTURY

In the first of a new series of lectures starting on Wednesday January 27, Dr Martin Westwell, a young chemist from Oxford University, will describe the war against superbugs. As well as explaining how antibiotics work, he will discuss the frightening prospect that, for the first time in the history of medicine, we have no weapons with which to fight the most deadly infections.

The talk will be introduced by Professor Susan Greenfield, director of the Royal Institution. There will be the opportunity for questions from the audience.

The lecture will be held at 7.30pm at the Royal Institution of Great Britain, 21 Albemarle Street, London W1X 4BS.

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A dousing for dowzers

DOWSING lies right at the ragged edge of science, a hinterland occupied by ideas whose time may be past but which simply refuse to die. There is no plausible mechanism to explain it, but belief persists, aided occasionally by scientific experiments which seem to show that the technique really works.

Among the most painstaking of these were carried out in the 1980s by physicists in Munich, who concluded that most dowzers did no better than chance, but that a few "showed an extraordinarily high rate of success, which can scarcely, if at all, be explained as due to chance".

Nonsense, says Professor Jim Enright, of Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, California. He accuses Professor Betz of "wishful thinking" in his interpretation of the Munich experiments which, he says, provide no evidence that dowsing does work.

The experiments were carried out in a barn near Munich. On the ground floor was a 30m length of track, along which a wagon could be moved. Mounted on the wagon was a length of pipe with water circulating through it.

For each test the position of the wagon along the track was determined by a random number generated by a computer. On the floor above, the dowzers were asked to work out for each test the pipe was, without, of course, being able to see it.

From 500 volunteers, 43 dowzers were selected, and they took part in 104 sets of tests, or a total of 843 tests. Most were a failure; the argument centres over whether, as

the experimenters claimed, a minority of dowzers really could detect the correct position of the pipe. This claim, says Professor Enright in the current issue of *Skeptical Inquirer*, rests on the results of seven series of tests out of the 104 actually conducted. Three of these produced very good results, the other four

reasonably good results. The six dowzers involved also took part in unsuccessful tests, which seems to rule out claims that they had special gifts. And Professor Enright works out that even in their successful tests, the dowzers (with one exception) would have been more nearly right had they simply guessed that the pipe was in the middle of

the track each time. "The Munich experiments constitute a failure as can be imagined of dowzers to do what they claim they can," he concludes.

Professor Betz, naturally, disagrees. He has since been involved in evaluating a ten-year programme, financed by the German Government, to find water in a number of Third World countries.

Not only did dowzers find water, he asserts, but in hundreds of cases they were able to predict the depth of the well to within 10 to 20 per cent. "We carefully considered the statistics of these correlations and they far exceeded lucky guesses," he says.

So who's right? Both men claim to be evaluating the evidence scientifically and they reach entirely different conclusions.

Like the water that dowzers set out to find, this one will run and run.



SCIENCE BRIEFING
Nigel Hawkes

LAST year seismologists discovered that the Earth vibrates with a steady hum far below the level of human audibility. The finding, by several teams including one led by Dr Naoki Suda of Nagoya University of Japan, caused puzzlement and some scepticism.

Geologists have known for nearly 40 years that earthquakes can make the Earth ring like a bell, but there are no few quakes to account for background hum.

By the time of the American Geophys-

Tune in to the humming Earth

cal Union's meeting in December, seismologists had accepted that the hum was real, but were still searching for a cause.

Dr Göran Ekström of Harvard has worked out that the hum, which has a frequency of between three and eight minutes, would require an almost constant supply of magnitude 5.8 earthquakes, which occur only once every few days. Dr

Suda believes that winds may be the cause. *Science* reports. He has found that the hum comes and goes during the day, peaking at any point on the Earth's surface when the local time of day is between noon and 8pm, and weakening between midnight and 6am.

This is the same pattern as intense thunderstorms over Africa and Asia, and means that powerful winds striking the Earth's surface are responsible for the hum — disappointing some seismologists, who would prefer it to be caused by internal activity of the Earth.

Mind the gap

SEVEN years ago two US scientists said that women athletes would overtake men by the middle of the next century in every event from 200 metres to the marathon. But a new study says this won't happen.

In *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, Phillip Starling and colleagues from the Georgia Institute of Technology say that the gender difference in distance running has stopped narrowing.

They used world rankings for 1980 to 1996 to extract the best and the 100th best times for the 1,500 metres and the marathon.

In the 1,500 metres, the gender difference in world best times is 11.1 per cent. In the marathon 11.2 per cent. While the 100th best time for women in the marathon improved in the early 1980s as more women took up the event, the gap with men has stopped narrowing. It is likely, say the team, that these differences will remain fairly constant.

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سكراين لايصل

Oliver's army is here today

Thomas Strathclyde on Blair's Cromwellian Lords reforms

Today the Government will invite the British people to board a train to yet another unknown destination. It will publish a White Paper and a Bill designed to destroy the existing House of Lords and upset the balance between the two Houses of Parliament, without itself having, or declaring, any view of what the long-term powers, functions or composition of the Lords should be. It is hard to imagine anything more reckless or irresponsible.

This Bill is not a reform to regulations on the plucking of the tail feathers of pigeons. It affects the independence of the revising chamber in our Parliament. The Lords is where citizens and businesses are protected against bad law. It is — in the words of its sacked Labour Leader, Lord Richard — "effectively the only place in which the legislature can curb the power of the executive".

Change in Parliament should be effected only after careful cross-party discussion and full public consultation. Instead, in a typical display of arrogance, the Government will plunge on with scarcely a week's "consultation".

This House of Lords has not served the people badly. Indeed, on matters like the absurd beef-on-the-bone ban, the age of consent, the fair treatment of students at Scottish universities and the right of people to vote for a candidate of their choice by name at elections, I suspect the House is closer to the people's idea of what is sensible than the "people's Government".

It is bizarre that when Tony Blair is "relaunching" his Government ready to "deliver" on the schools and hospitals which are fast descending into chaos, his flagship priority is to spend a year on an ideological crusade against hereditary peers.

We would have chosen neither this priority, nor this Bill. But, as with Labour's other ill-thought-through constitutional changes, we have to deal with the situation as we find it. That is why — if they are proposed — we will back Lord Weatherill's amendments to keep 100 hereditary peers in the interim House. This is not a trade union pact to preserve hereditaries. We want to avoid the country being left, indefinitely, with a totally nominated quango.

Hereditaries may seem outdated to modernisers. But it is part of our national tradition and every family's instinct. The fact that peers cannot be "deslected" assures their independence. Something at least as independent should come in their place. I know of no wholly nominated legislature that has any moral authority or standing. Certainly, Lord Irvine of Lairg and Baroness Jay of Paddington are no more "democratic" than I am.

No British politician since Cromwell has claimed the power Mr Blair now hopes to exercise — to determine the party balance and composition of a House of Parliament. The Prime Minister has become sensitive to this charge. He boasts that he will not exercise this huge growth of patronage to the full. He says he will subcontract the choice

of crossbench peers to a new committee. But who will appoint this great and good committee? Mr Blair? To whom will they be accountable? No one. Who will vet the peers they propose? Will the "independent" members they nominate have to declare their political and business links? If someone gave money to Labour years ago, but has never joined the party, could she be a "cross-bench" peer? Where would Bernie Ecclestone stand? Could he — who has done so much for motor-racing — be created a crossbench peer?

And what does Mr Blair want of a House of Lords? Unlike the previous Conservative Government, which accepted 40 per cent of its 250 defeats in the Lords, this Government has almost always insisted on having its way. This is true even when they are defeated on the votes of life peers alone. It is not the presence of hereditary peers that seems to rankle with Mr Blair so much as the thought that he might ever be asked to think again.

If the Lords is genuinely reformed, it will be made more powerful, the Commons still weaker. I would welcome a more powerful and independent chamber. But would Mr Blair? He would, let him say so. He should do as Harold Wilson did on his Lords Reform Bill in 1968-69, come to Parliament and make a statement setting out where he stands and why.

It is still not too late for Mr Blair to shelve his "flagship" measure and to attend to the "real business" of jobs, schools and health. We have forced him to agree to set up a royal commission to look into the long-term future of the Upper House — that was not mentioned in his manifesto.

A commission is a good idea. It should have the widest possible terms of reference. It must have as a chairman a senior judge, whose independence from government cannot be impugned. It should be able to look at the powers, functions and composition of the House. It must look at the fallout from new parliaments and assemblies within our kingdom, and the impact of new Labour's surrender of further powers to Brussels.

It has a great task. In its hand may lie the key to rebalancing our tormented constitution and keeping our country one. In any sane scheme of things this process of thought and consultation would come before Parliament was changed, not after. But in the Walter Mitty world of spin and slogan we now seem to inhabit, action comes before thought. The Government's Bill will strengthen the patronage of the Prime Minister and the power of the executive. It will do nothing to advance the interests of the people Parliament should serve. But then isn't that increasingly the trademark of "new Labour"?

The author is the Tory Leader in the House of Lords.

Brown, Mordaunt's column will appear tomorrow.



Big bang theorist

Cook's foreign policy towards Kosovo has been reduced to a four-letter word

So what happens now? What has fate to offer the echoing threats of the laptop bombardiers?

Last October the might of the Anglo-American alliance reached a so-called agreement with the Yugoslav President, Slobodan Milosevic. It was a "Saddam", a jerrybuilt, heads-you-win, tails-we-lose deal, which came unstuck in next to no time. Hundreds more Kosovans are dead, tens of thousands homeless and Nato generals are again dancing attendance in Belgrade. The Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, is dancing too. Thumbing his battered lexicon, he incants "deeply foolish... unacceptable... shocking... murderous... horrific". Mr Cook recites all this with sombre mien, looks down at his word list and finds the armoury is bare. His mouth opens and shuts in silence. There is just a ghost whispering in his ear. "Real men drop bombs".

We are back to our old friend, the bomb. British foreign policy is now a four-letter word. So bankrupt is this neo-Palmerstonian stance, so counter-productive to its goals, so devoid of success, that it can only respond to 45 dead Albanians by threatening 45 dead Serbs. Policy is dumbed down to a bomb for a bomb and a corpse for a corpse. Dictators who sneer at Mr Cook's heat-seeking adjectives must feel the blast of his heat-seeking bombs.

Last year Mr Cook and other Nato bosses planned a bombing campaign whose goal was to force Belgrade to stop persecuting the separatist Kosovan Liberation Army (KLA) and to offer devolution without independence to Kosovo. A roughly similar prescription has defeated the Northern Ireland Office for 20 years. It was so unfeasible and unenforceable that the American envoy, Richard Holbrooke, had to race to Belgrade to make smoke for a Nato retreat. Mr Milosevic eats Western diplomats for breakfast. He promised and lied and Nato climbed down.

That October deal was as rotten as a deal could be. Monitors were sent (or rather sent back) to Kosovo without weapons or guards. The atrocities continued, with a horror that seems uniquely Balkan. Serbian withdrawal was a predictable sham. Devolution did not occur. Mr Holbrooke's appeasement of Mr Milosevic was staged to flatter Nato and Western politicians. It merely reassured Belgrade that the West had a big mouth but would not go to war. Yet it emboldened the KLA to think that, as in Bosnia, a few more

atrocities might jolt Nato into taking sides against the Serbs. The October deal sent the worst possible message to everyone. Mr Cook welcomed it. Nato must now decide whether to start the same disastrous round over again. There has been another apparent Serb atrocity in Kosovo. Mr Milosevic has done a Saddam, and expelled a monitor. Britain has declared its patience exhausted and resumed sabre-rattling. There is nothing in the United Nations Charter to give Britain and the United States the right to a unilateral attack on Yugoslavia for actions "essentially within the domestic jurisdiction" of that state. But the UN is a limp rag. As Mr Cook's approval of the American attack on Sudan showed, he is not over-concerned with international law. In defence of airstrikes he might plead Chapter Seven of the UN Charter, on protecting international security. But airstrikes are more likely to destabilise the region than calm it. It will encourage cross-border support for the KLA and inspire every separatist group in the Balkans.

As in Iraq, bombing is meaningless without military follow-up. The reason for bombing Yugoslavia is to alter the balance of power on the ground in Kosovo. That is achieved only by sending in troops. Such invasion is what the KLA has been encouraged by Mr Cook's policy to expect. Is it meant? If not, the threat cruelly invites KLA resurgence and ruthless Serbian suppression. But invasion cannot police an active civil war. It must either assist the KLA in the military dismembering of a European state. Or it must help the Serbs to restore Yugoslav sovereignty against KLA rebellion. Which of these dreadful goals is now British policy?

There is at present a Mediterranean country whose atrocities were daily on the television screens. It is called Lebanon. In the 1980s it

was racked by civil war, invaded by its neighbour Israel and threatened by Syria to the East. Syria was a pariah state whose dictator, General Assad, had mass-murdered his own people, sponsored anti-Western terrorism and destabilised his region. The West decided to save Lebanon from this horror. Interventions from 1982 to 1984 saw American, British, French and Italian troops struggling "to keep the warring factions apart". The carnage continued. The atrocity rate soared. Nothing whatever was gained. The intervention was wholly inept.

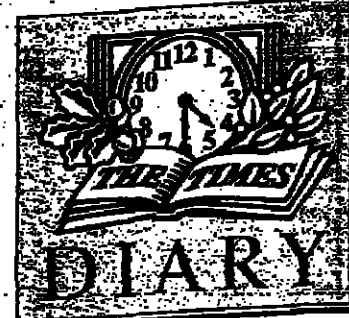
Western troops eventually withdrew in February 1984. The Foreign Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, admitting that Beirut was "too dangerous". Within months, neighbouring Syria took effective control of northern Lebanon. Since then, Beirut has been returning to normal. General Assad is no longer a Saddam-like monster — any more than Saddam himself once was. He is regarded with good favour in Washington, a force for stability, possibly even a Middle East peace-broker.

Lebanon is not Yugoslavia. Any more than it is Bosnia or Iraq. But it offers a crude answer to those who claim there is no alternative to bombing. The alternative to bombing is not bombing. It is to remove the threat of military intervention, as in Lebanon. Many dictatorships in Asia and South America have contrived to make their own way towards democracy without the goad of Western bombs or sanctions. Prosperity, trade, contact and advancing political maturity have been sufficient. All are currently being denied to Belgrade. The thesis that a bombed, isolated, embattled and impoverished Yugoslavia is more, rather than less, sympathetic to Kosovan autonomy defies common sense. The thesis could be held only by an idiot, a Cabinet minister or a large body of "liberal" opinion.

comment@the-times.co.uk



Simon Jenkins

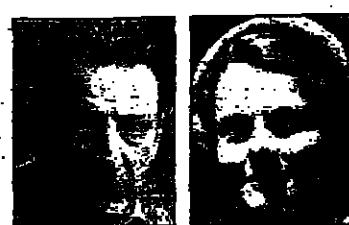


Freud slip

A GUILTY conscience? Lord Goodman — alleged to have siphoned £10 million from Viscount Portman — left a valuable Lucian Freud etching of himself to Christopher Portman, the aggrieved viscount's heir. The vivid scribbling, one of four used by Freud towards a drawing for the National Portrait Gallery, was donated secretly to Portman, to the surprise of friends.

Lady Avon — Anthony Eden's widow who nursed Goodman to the end — admired the works and all assumed that she would inherit one. Instead, Lady A (pictured below with the artist) received 40 volumes of Trollope, poor dear.

"Christopher realises how valuable it is," Lady Portman assures me from Antigua. Why didn't the old rogue leave it to the viscount? "Oh, I don't think he wanted it." Wise, inheritance tax being higher even than lawyers' bills.

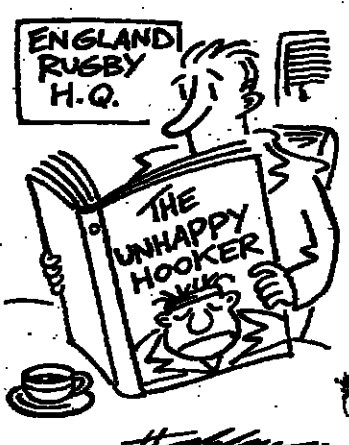


● THE demise of Amanda Platell recalls a recent Spectator lunch when the Express on Sunday Editress fell into conversation with Charlie Whelan about Max Hastings, amiable Editor of the Evening Standard. Max could not last long, they concurred. Perhaps, but rather longer than both of them.

Cover up

LAP DANCING is hitting Hampstead. And the suburb's PC residents have begun a campaign to remove the joint. Secrets just yards from South Hampstead High School. Peggy Jay, President of the Heath and Hampstead Society, is rallying her fully clad troops: "I have lived here for 86 years and it is not what we expect." John Humphrys, the grand inquisitor, wishes them well, after protesting against Secrets' other club near his Hammersmith bachelor pad. "I am very annoyed about it. I wrote a tough piece excoriating them, but they cut out some phrases and turned them into approval," he said. "We had some success in court though. At least we got the judge to make the girls keep their knickers on." For that, I am sure all residents will be grateful.

● OFF to France to bag honorary degrees: the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Hume — and Lord St John of Fawley: "I'm the party's nonconformist conscience."



Dance flaw

THE Oxford Union is in a spin. The Austrian Ambassador is coming to its ball. Problem. Union President, Theo Mills, cannot dance; and as the ambassador is a Dr Eva Nowotny, Mills should lead her in the waltz.

Enter the Rev David Johnson who, with a stray count, is teaching the pup. "It is like Steptoe trying to teach his father," wails Johnson.

● PETER MANDELSON is chums with his fellow bachelor, Sir Edward Heath, says Anthony Barnett in Prospect. "Both single. Both meretricious products of suburbia. Both able and obsessive. Each arrogant, lacking popular touch." Poor Peter: an insult too far.

Gay abandon

PLATO should be cited in sex education, says Roger Scruton. Greek love, then? Nope. The distinction between natural and perverted desire plays no part in current education. Plato's teaching, that gays should sublimate their desires, is crucial. "That is what Plato perceived, in his celebrations of the love that bears his name." Can't see it catching on.

JASPER GERARD

'Let us not linger, for a very slightly familiar bald man in a floral pinny has come in to lay for lunch'

Reluctant as I am to offer further confirmation to those of you who feel I should get out more — throw myself into cribbage or Flamenco dancing, find a dog to walk, an instrument to master, a horse to hobby, anything rather than spend any more time woolgathering in my loft — I have to tell you (for it is my curse to do so) that in the summer of AD97,999 it will be possible to dig for wrinkles on Cricklewood beach.

I worked that out after only an hour or so this morning. It is not, of course, what I climbed up into the loft to do, what I planned to do in the loft was have a bit of a think about whether President Saddam Hussein might not in fact be Lord Lucan. They are, after all, identical and of an age, and it would explain much. But

while you may rest assured that I shall return to this theory at a later date, for the time being I prefer to nip forward 96,000 years to the time not yet being, so that I can trot downstairs from this loft, knot a handkerchief about my head, and go for a paddle. Because hardly had I begun investigating the likeliest fugitive route, in 1974, from Belgravia to Baghdad than a wheezing seagull suddenly shrieked outside my window, not merely raising my head from my atlas but also reminding me of a letter to *The Times* a week before, from the Chief Scientist of English Nature. I do not of course mean that to do this, it was just an ordinary shriek. I mean only that my memory was jogged in that marine nano-second to the re-

marks of Dr Keith Duff, who had written to say that the recent erosion of Beachy Head was a natural force, and we should think twice before shoring the coastline up with concrete, learning instead "to live with change rather than always seeking to prevent it".

What could a wool-gatherer do at this recollection but slap shut his atlas and phone English Nature in Peterborough? And yes, though Dr Duff was not at his desk, I did eventually get through to a helpful chap who could answer my question. The answer is that our southern coastline is eroding at roughly a metre a year. So I thanked him,

Alan Coren



opened the atlas again, took a ruler, and noted that the distance between Beachy Head and Cricklewood, as the seagull flies, is 96km. By AD97,999, therefore, the sea will have reached my front gate. Or, rather, 207ft below it, this being my gate's height above sea-level, according to an equally helpful chap at the Ordnance Survey office. My house, in short, will be perched on the White Cliffs of Cricklewood, overlooking a charming little South Coast resort.

Let us come down from the loft now, very slowly, three millennia a step, and look about us. See, my dining room contains not one large table but four small ones,

each with a bottle of HP Sauce chained to it, and a jug of plastic cornflowers, and a cruet set engraved "Seaview Boarding House". The walls once hung with pictures now sport framed notices: "Please Do Not Take Towels To Beach And Oblige" and "After Meals Ensure Your Serviette is Replaced In Ring Provided". Let us, though, not linger, for a very slightly familiar bald man in a floral pinny has just come in to lay for lunch, and it is time for us to pop outside.

Oh, look, a fine summer morning, the sea-mist lifting to reveal Hendon Pier and the Edgware Lighthouse bobbing beyond, and the cheery strains of *William Tell* wafting up from the bandstand below, gilded gem of that fine broad promenade which stretches all the way from Golders' Cove to Wembley Bay. Focus the big brass telescope standing on Seaview's fetchingly groomed front lawn, and what do we see? We see beach huts, and wheelie-stalls, and ice-cream carts, and striped wooden deckchairs, we see little ones cross-legged on the sand, hooting at Punch and Judy, and large ones wrapped in towels struggling to remove their trousers, we see pedalos and donkeys and a motor-boat rocking lazily beside a blackboard offering trips to Fitchley Island.

How reassuring it all is! How right Dr Duff was to urge us to live with change, for nothing really changes! Even though, as we step away from the telescope, a tiny piece of cliff beyond our feet breaks off, and falls.



HAGUE'S IDENTITY

Strong themes will achieve little without policy detail

Only a brave politician is willing to explore issues of identity and what it means to be British. As William Hague conceded last night, there used to be something very un-British about trying to define who the British are. The consequence of that embarrassed silence has been that a few, mostly academic, observers have been able to portray the United Kingdom as an artificial creation, built from opposition to Frenchmen and Catholics and lacking any form of coherent cultural core. It was partly that charge that the Conservative leader sought, in a well-crafted and eloquent address, to confront.

Mr Hague's willingness to undertake this task is welcome and his arguments are persuasive. A country that is about to undertake an era of intense constitutional change needs to have some sense of itself before deciding what sorts of institutions it seeks to abolish, change or create. The force of Mr Hague's text was also apparent in an effective rebuke to those within his party who would abandon Scotland outright and seek to expand and exploit an emerging sense of English nationalism. The dangerous flirtation of the Shadow Cabinet with an English Parliament is at least at an end.

The Tory leader sought to draw distinctions between Britain's democratic traditions and those that pervade continental Europe. He did so not in a tone of splendid isolation or arrogant superiority but as a matter of simple fact. It is indeed the case that, as Mr Hague asserted, "where we invest our national identity in our political institutions, many other European countries have been let down by their political institutions within living memory". For that reason the constitutional implications of close integration within the European Union are more profound and more destabilising for Britain than for almost all of our neighbours.

This was also, however, a coded speech about the Conservative Party as well as the wider country. Mr Hague emphasised the

need for Conservatives to accept Britain in its modern form rather than wallow knee-deep in nostalgia. He acknowledged that his party had created the impression that it was "obsessed with economics" and implied that in future it would seek to fight on other fields, notably cultural and social values. He pointed in broad terms to the policy review ahead.

That examination should, in truth, have started already. The public still has little idea about what parts of the Tory past Mr Hague is willing to repudiate, still less what new ideas might be adopted. The Conservative Party listens to Mr Hague's message of change and inclusiveness and applauds politely. There is not much evidence that it is willing to undertake reform on anything like the scale that its leader rightly recognises must be done.

As a result, the Tory thinking appears to be on hold as Mr Hague awaits some movement in the polls that will in turn allow him more space for manoeuvre. Able spokesmen such as Ann Widdecombe and David Willetts have been put in high-profile posts but with precious little new that they are permitted to articulate.

There is a twofold danger in this strategy. Either the voters will not return to the fold without a clearer signal that the Conservatives have repented, or any small upward shift in public opinion will be seized upon by some in the parliamentary party as an alibi to postpone fundamental change once again.

Britain may not suffer from an identity crisis: but the condition of the Conservative Party is far less certain. It continues to be seen by a stark majority of voters, representing the last, discredited administration, not the official Opposition, and certainly not an alternative Government. Three years ago, when John Major invited a challenge to his leadership, his opponents responded with the prophetic slogan "no change, no chance". Those words are equally relevant to Tory policy today.

RETURN OF THE KING

As Jordan celebrates, it speculates

They danced in the streets, sang and cheered. The airport was filled with flags, bagpipers and banners and a million people lined the narrow streets of Amman to welcome their King. In all his 47 years on the throne, King Hussein of Jordan has never known a homecoming like this.

Returning after six months abroad, intensive cancer treatment and a taxing negotiating session to clinch the Wye accords, the King could scarcely contain his emotion. He is the world's longest-serving executive ruler in one of the world's most turbulent regions. Jordan is a country largely fashioned, held together and given patriotic substance by its monarch. The relationship has not always been easy. King Hussein has survived numerous assassination attempts, coup plots, uprisings and attacks by his neighbours.

He has been isolated in his support for the West, reviled by opponents of the Hashemite dynasty and denounced by Arab nationalists. He has seen his advisers murdered, had to give up claim to the West Bank and lost administrative control of the Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. Yet he has brought a stability and prosperity to a country that has provided an oasis of moderation in a harsh desert of hatred. Jordanians know that they have been better ruled than any of their Arab neighbours. A quarter of the population filled the streets to give him a rancorous welcome. No drummed-up applause by vain dictators has matched anything like it.

Yet there was a poignancy to his return. The King has been proclaimed cured. He

does indeed look better than the pictures of the shrunken, bald figure who helped President Clinton get to agreement on an Israeli withdrawal last autumn. But the King himself already speaks of the time when he will no longer rule Jordan.

Like John of Gaunt looking with prophetic eye at the future, the King has awoken speculation about his successor. For years his youngest brother, Prince Hassan, has been the designated Crown Prince. After taking over day-to-day decision-making, he has ruled as regent for the past six months. On the whole, events have run smoothly during this time. But throughout Jordan there is recognition that the Oxford-educated Prince, a man short in charisma but long in verbosity, lacks the agility of his brother. He is a respected thinker, committed to peace with Israel. But in times of crisis he fails to inspire his countrymen.

Already destabilising rumours of dynastic struggle have begun. There is talk of rival aspirations for future succession between the sons of King Hussein and Prince Hassan and intrigue by their mothers. The King is thought now to hope that the Crown will pass directly to his 18-year-old son Hamza, who has impressed those around him with his charisma and young resemblance to his father. Any such change, however, could unleash corrosive ambitions that have so far been held in check in this extended family. The utmost delicacy is needed for any change, a quality for which the King has long been noted. It could be his last, most important service to his country.

FARMING FASHIONS

Diversity is agriculture's best option

Yesterday the Commons Agricultural Select Committee published a report on rural development. Agriculture, it recognised, is no longer the mainstay of rural society. Only through diversification will farmers find the means to survive. Some four fifths of Britain is currently farmed. The agricultural industry constitutes an important resource of land, capital and local knowledge. But it still remains largely untapped.

Farmers are notoriously sceptical of change. Long after hundreds of Londoners have made a scrum through the organic stalls of Spitalfields market part of their weekend shopping routine, the leader column of *Farmers Weekly*, belatedly announces in the current issue that "organic systems have come of age". The staid publication, in large part financed by the advertising of agrochemical industries, reflects a significant shift in farmers' attitudes as it condones organic "muck and magic" as a "serious profit-generating operation". Battered by the beef ban, Asian market collapse and an over-strong pound, even the most traditional British farmers are looking to new initiatives as they struggle to save their businesses from bankruptcy.

Many are diversifying their stock and crop mixes. Deer, ostriches and alpaca are raised on land where cattle and sheep once grazed. Lupins and linseed are grown alongside cereals. High quality, locally

labelled food finds a specialist but growing market, and farm retail shops and kitchen restaurants are opening all over the country. Other farmers are catering for the tourist trade as barn conversions and caravan sites provide accommodation. Pets corners attract children. Miller mazes and rural cemeteries make more unusual options.

But diversification is not an instant panacea. Farmers hold one of the nation's most precious commodities in their safe-keeping, the landscape. Fields planted with plastic cloches may shield rows of delicate lettuces from harsh Welsh winds, but they despoil valley views. Off-track driving may bring extra income, but it destroys rural peace. The countryside is not a playground.

Farmers are the stewards of moors and mountains, fields and fens. But this stewardship comes at a price. While many wait for the European Union to come to its senses with a system of CAP reform that will not just benefit big producers, the British Government must help to tide low-intensity farmers over difficult times. The subsidies it offers must be far more specifically targeted — not simply directed at the end product. They must be meted out in such a way that they help to protect the lifestyles of those such as hill farmers whose traditional agricultural practices preserve the beauty of the British landscape as we know it now.

Call to close secure training centres

From the Social Policy Manager of The Children's Society

Sir, The Government's announcement that it intends to send in the riot police to control children at the Medway Secure Training Centre in Kent shows, as your report of January 14 rightly points out, how illusory the progressive dreams of the secure training centres (STCs) have proved. In fact, the centre should never have been built.

If those of us who work with disturbed and damaged children are going to make a difference to these children's lives we need to provide small units where children will respond to individual attention. Put a large group of damaged and disturbed children together and you have a tinderbox. Bad behaviour inevitably breeds worse behaviour.

The Children's Society made these views clear when the centres were first announced under the previous Government, as did magistrates, other children's charities and penal reform groups. In opposition, a member of the current Government described them as "colleges of crime". Despite these warnings, the Government not only opened Medway STC, it is planning several similar centres.

This Government has talked a great deal about individual responsibility. To provide an unsuitable service to these disturbed children and then to threaten to send in the riot police is an abnegation of its own responsibility. It is iniquitous for this Government to turn round and blame disturbed children who have been left in an institution that is known to be failing them.

The only solution to this problem is to close down the secure training centres in favour of small units which can respond to these damaged children as individuals.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER SMITH,
Social Policy Manager,
The Children's Society,
Edward Rudolf House,
Margery Street, WC1X 0JL,
January 14.

Kosovo's children

From the Deputy Director of Unicef UK

Sir, As dozens of vulnerable women and children flee Kosovo (letter, January 19), Kosovo children — both Albanian and Serb — are again caught in the crossfire. They are at risk not only from mortars, but also from silent killers like pneumonia, typhoid, hepatitis, and the highest incidence of polio in Europe.

Visiting Kosovo, even during the ceasefire, I found severely traumatised children. They were untypically quiet, too scared to play, and racked with bronchitis and acute respiratory diseases. The fragile peace enabled the launch of an immunisation campaign, restocking of health centres and restarting of education.

Yet, last week, even before the Kosovo killings, our field workers were repeatedly prevented from reaching outlying areas. Now we fear that the explosive political climate will trigger greater uncertainty and deprivation for children. It is hoped that the politicians negotiating peace and aid for Kosovo will put the needs of children — for shelter, medicines, education and safety — first.

Yours sincerely,
MARIE STAUNTON,
Deputy Director,
Unicef UK,
55 Lincoln's Inn Fields, WC2A 3NB,
January 18.

A doctor in the House?

From Dr C. J. Barrow

Sir, Having clearly stated: "I have a degree and a PhD", Ms Dawn Primarolo was asked by Valerie Grove (interview, January 9) why she didn't use the title of Doctor.

She replied: "Because I didn't actually submit my thesis... but my excuse is that two years into it I was elected".

Given the earlier claim, this is rather like saying I have a GCSE but failed to sit the exams.

Yours faithfully,
CHRIS BARROW,
20 Coed Mor,
Derwen Fawr, Sketty,
Swansea SA2 8BQ,
January 9.

Many happy returns?

From Mr Prentis Hancock

Sir, Mr J. R. Callin is at liberty to look forward to any set date he chooses for the return to their homelands of exiled Scots and Welsh (letter, January 15).

In the interim, he might like to consider the effects on the world, let alone on Britain, should the Scottish diaspora decide to up sticks and return to their clans.

Who would run things? Westminster might be hard put to find a Cabinet.

Yours ay,
PRENTIS HANCOCK,
Flat B, 10 Tadmira Road,
World's End,
Chelsea, SW10 0NU.
prentis@worldend.u-net.com
January 15.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Hume's relationship with Carey

From Mr Martin Pendergast

Sir, I suspect Cardinal Hume will have raised an eyebrow, one of his more common gestures of disapproval, when reading Ann Widdecombe's perception of Anglican-Roman Catholic relations report, "Hume denies he has contempt for Carey", January 14.

Behind the simple Benedictine image of the cardinal is a consummate yet sensitive politician, a quality which Miss Widdecombe might seek to emulate.

I suggest her view of the cardinal's appreciation of the Archbishop of Canterbury reflects more her disaffected Anglican outlook and the axes which she continues to grind.

Yours sincerely,
MARTIN PENDERGAST,
57 Lyme Grove, E9 6PX,
January 14.

From Sir Robin Day

Sir, In an extract from the new book about Cardinal Basil Hume which you printed with special prominence on January 14, the cardinal is said to have described in 1977 how he had been interviewed by me about celi-

bacy, in a way which was "potentially embarrassing".

This, insofar as it refers to me, is untrue. I have never interviewed the cardinal. I am informed that he was astonished, as was I, to read this story.

The author, Mr Neil Balfour, has apologised to me for his mistake. He appears to have confused my name with that of some other interviewer. Whoever did the objectionable interview, it was definitely not me.

Yours truly,
ROBIN DAY,
Garrick Club, WC2E 9AY,
January 15.

From Mr Richard Willmott

Sir, How unfortunate it is that Ann Widdecombe cannot emulate her hero and let her contempt for the Archbishop of Canterbury never be "publicly discernible".

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD WILLMOTT
(Headmaster),
The Dixie Grammar School,
Market Bosworth,
Leicestershire CV13 0LE,
January 14.

Legal basis for 'presumed consent' of organ donors

From Professor Margaret Esiri and others

Sir, There is another aspect to the question of donors' "presumed consent" (letters, January 13). This concerns the use of tissue for research rather than for transplantation.

We are engaged in research that aims to increase understanding of schizophrenia by studying brain tissue from sufferers after death (and tissue from healthy persons unaffected by this devastating disease, for comparative purposes). This is extremely difficult to acquire, largely because permission is needed from next-of-kin at a time when they are likely to be distressed by their recent bereavement.

Some doctors and nurses understandably hesitate to ask for this permission for fear of increasing distress or because they are unaware of the need for such tissue.

If there was legislation that enabled tissue to be made available for medical research as long as no objection

had been made known, research such as ours would receive a considerable boost and improved understanding of schizophrenia and other brain diseases be brought that much closer.

Yours sincerely,
MARGARET ESIRI
(Professor of Neuropathology,
Oxford University),
TIM CROW
(Professor of Psychiatry,
Oxford University),
PAUL HARRISON
(Reader in Psychiatry,
Oxford University),
Schizophrenia Research Group,
Radcliffe Infirmary,
Oxford OX2 6HE,
margaret.esiri@clinical-neurology.oxford.ac.uk
January 14.

From Dr David W. Evans

Sir, The presumption of consent to anything seems to me to be a very dangerous development and I wonder

The Jacqueline we remember

From Mr Julian Lloyd Webber and others

Sir, *Hilary and Jackie*, a film purporting to chronicle the life of cellist Jacqueline du Pré and based on a book by her brother and sister, is to be released this week. It concentrates heavily on an affair which Jacqueline had with her sister's husband and portrays her as selfish, spoilt and manipulative.

This is not the Jacqueline du Pré that we, as her friends and colleagues, knew.

Jacqueline possessed a wonderful joy in making music and a unique ability to bring that joy to her audience. This is the Jacqueline du Pré that we remember.

Yours,
JULIAN LLOYD WEBBER,
YEHUDI MENUHIN,
ITZHAK PERLMAN,
WILLIAM PLEETH,
M. ROSTROPOVICH,
P. ZUKERMAN,
c/o IMG Artists,
Media House,
3 Burlington Lane, W4 2TH,
January 18.

Owners' rights

From Mr Neil Howlett

Sir, Anthea Lawson's amusing article (Weekend, January 9) about Mr Sam Gratton, who intended to purchase the lease of a flat in southeast London which he then discovered to be situated above a brothel, raises an interesting issue for lawyers and all potential purchasers of a house or flat.

The buyer of a detached house may have no easy redress against anti-social neighbours. However, the buyer of a flat in a building or of a house in a development can and should acquire rights to prevent any such misbehaviour, and the lease should include "covenants" (promises) designed for that purpose. So should the transfers of houses on any well prepared estate development, giving the owner the right to take action directly against other owners who break restrictions on the use of their property.

At the very least, tenants or owners should have the right to require the

freeholder or developer to take action against other tenants or owners.

The kind of restrictions imposed will normally prohibit illegal or immoral activity, although this may not always help those in a similar position to Mr Gratton: prostitution in itself is not illegal, so a prostitute operating alone is not breaking the law. However, anyone living with the prostitute and living off his or her earnings will be.

Causing nuisance — such as excessive numbers of or abusive visitors, especially at odd hours — may also be prohibited. So may running a business. In most cases the covenants will restrict such activities, not only by the owner but those permitted by the owner. The key to success is to have records taken at the time which will prove the case.

Yours sincerely,
NEIL HOWLETT,
Harris and Harris (solicitors),
11 Stony Street,
Frome, Somerset BA11 1BU,
January 10.

Advance intelligence

From Mr Robert Vincenz

Sir, The news that their Government has ordered Chinese airline bosses to fly on New Year's Day in order to calm passengers' trepidation about the millennium bug (report, January 16) must surely be welcomed in Europe.

China's midnight comes some seven or eight hours before ours: so if their millennium bug causes anything to go wrong we'll be sure to hear of it pretty quickly, and consequently have plenty of time to land safely ourselves.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT VINCENZ,
Dilly House, Wildern,
Andover, Hampshire SP11 0JF,
January 16.

Wigs for judges

From Mr Andrew Mier

Sir, In claiming that wigs make judges appear out of touch with the country inhabited by the litigants (report, January 12, Sir Richard Scott, Vice-Chancellor of the Supreme Court, is presumably referring to civil litigation).

In criminal cases, where the defendants have a choice, most who contest the charges elect trial before a Crown Court judge who wears a wig, rather than before magistrates who do not.

Perhaps the lesson is that litigants are more concerned about the perceived quality of justice in the courts than in fashionable ideas about dressing to be in touch with the world.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW MIER,
Gray's Inn Chambers,
Gray's Inn, WC1R 5JR,
January 12.

Millennium Bart

From Dr Morley Halse

Sir, Seeing the Simpsons featured in Saturday's megasection of *The Times* serves to remind us that the year 2000 is significant only as a result of a long process of evolution that has given us four fingers and a thumb on each hand.

If, like Bart Simpson, we had four digits per hand, base eight arithmetic would be universal.

Next year would then be 3720 and so nothing particularly special.

Yours sincerely,
MORLEY HALSE,
6 Ashbee Gardens,
Herne Bay,
Kent CT16 6TU.
m.halse@ukc.ac.uk
January 11.

From His Honour Anthony Tibber

Sir, I have just retired from the circuit bench. For many years I wore a wig when entering court (that was my concession to convention) but removed it in the early stages of the proceedings and sat for most of the day bareheaded. Some counsel glared and kept their wigs on, others, with a sigh of (I think) relief, took them off.

I know of no power and no authority which can tell a judge that he or she must wear a wig. If those judges who wish to get rid of the wig simply ceased to wear them, most of the remaining judges would probably follow suit.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY TIBBER,
22 Holmwood Gardens, N3 3NS,
January 12.

Letters may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Drink-drive limit

From Mr Peter McKellican

Sir, Last April I was banned from driving for a year. I had been 50 per cent over the limit — not roaring drunk, but I know the law and it was a "hair copy".

I travel widely in Europe, and I endorse your sentiments (leading article, "Know your limit", January 8) that, far from following any perceived lead from Europe by lowering our limit, we should seek to persuade our European partners to adopt some of our policies. Every time I explain my predicament to European business partners, be they French, Dutch, Spanish, Italian or German, they are astonished by our 12-month minimum ban.

I am sure that the success of drink-driving campaigns in Britain is largely due to the quite correct severity of the punishment. Our hard-hitting television campaigns are non-existent in France. Their limit may well be lower than ours, but if anyone were arrested and found to be slightly over it, they would in reality face a maximum ban of three months.

As a nation, our attitude to drinking and driving has changed for the better. Long may this continue. The attitude in much of mainland Europe has not, and until they follow our lead, will not.

Yours faithfully,
PETER MCKELICAN,
105 Knightrich Church Road,
Leicester LE2 3JN.

Something to chew on

From Dr R. J. S. Chinn

Sir, "I bet my ear to a bag of sweets," says Mr Mike Burton, former England prop forward (report, January 19), that the dispute between the Rugby Football Union and the Five Nations Committee will be short-lived.

Given the state of most prop forwards' ears, I know I for one would rather have the bag of sweets.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER CHINN,
86 Beryl Road, W6 8JU,
r.chinn@ukc.ac.uk
January 19.

Problem shelved

From Major-General I. S. Harrison, Royal Marines (ret)

Sir, Mr R. J. Slade (letter, January 18) reports finding Worcestershire sauce in a supermarket food section headed "Mexico".

In my post-retirement capacity as Director General of the British Food Export Council, I visited a supermarket in southern Italy, where I found Birds Custard on shelves reserved for petfoods.

Yours sincerely,
I. S. HARRISON,
Manor Cottage, Runtton,
Chichester, West Sussex PO20 6PU,
January 18.

Lifeboats
Royal National Lifeboat Institution

THE TIMES

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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 20 1999

AtHome creates Web giant with £4bn deal

FROM OLIVER AUGUST
IN NEW YORK

ATHOME, the Internet service provider controlled by AT&T, yesterday agreed to buy Excite, the loss-making Internet search company linked to BT, for \$6.7 billion (£4 billion) in the biggest online merger.

November, now worth about \$6.6 billion after the recent surge in Internet shares. Online consolidation is expected to drive technology stocks to new heights and valuation records.

The AtHome-Excite merger also marks the deepening of the alliance between BT and AT&T. The two transatlantic telecom leaders last year agreed to expand their traditional phone service in tandem but stopped short of a merger. BT owns

a 50 per cent stake in Excite UK, which it acquired for \$10 million. Under the terms of the deal, AtHome will issue 1.04 of its shares for each Excite share, valuing them at \$106.27, a 57 per cent premium to the last closing price. At the start of trading yesterday, shares jumped to \$106 before falling back to about \$95.

According to the agreement, the deal will be whisked through and is supposed to be completed in three months. The completion would also coincide with the closure of the \$32 billion AT&T takeover of TCI. The cable company is AtHome's biggest shareholder.

Mr Armstrong hopes to build an integrated media and telecoms company that delivers phone services and Internet content via the same hardware. With TCI, he acquired the hardware link to the Internet, while Excite will now form the content backbone.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	6027.8	(-96.3)
Yield	2.71%	
FTSE All Share	2770.73	(-37.96)
Nikkei	12770.44	(-34.82)
New York		
Dow Jones	9252.49	(-88.05)
S&P Composite	1238.32	(-3.54)

US RATE

Federal Funds	4.75%	(unch)
Long bond	5.11%	
Yield		

LONDON MONEY

3-month interbank	5.45%	(5.45-5.4)
Libor 3-month	5.45%	(5.45-5.4)
Libor 6-month	5.45%	(5.45-5.4)
Libor 12-month	5.45%	(5.45-5.4)

STERLING

New York	1.6533	(1.6529)
London		
\$	1.6533	(1.6518)
£	1.6533	(1.6518)
¥	113.27	(114.57)
¥	113.27	(114.57)
£	113.27	(114.57)

DOLLAR

London		
\$	1.6533	(1.6518)
£	1.6533	(1.6518)
¥	113.27	(114.57)
¥	113.27	(114.57)
£	113.27	(114.57)

Tokyo close Yen 114.06

MONTHLY SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Apr)	\$11.20	(\$10.95)
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GOLD

London close	\$285.75	(\$285.95)
Exchange rates		Page 24

* denotes midday trading prices

Inflation increase leads to fears of delay in rate cut

By ALASDAIR MURRAY
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

INFLATION unexpectedly climbed above target in December, raising fears that the Bank of England may delay further interest rate cuts.

Bae under attack after £7bn merger with GEC



High-flyers: Lord Simpson of Dunkeld, chief executive of GEC, parent group of Marconi, left, and Sir Richard Evans, chairman of British Aerospace

The annual rate of underlying inflation, which excludes mortgage interest payments, increased from 2.5 per cent in November to 2.6 per cent, the first time it has breached the target level since last July.

However, headline inflation continued to decline, reaching 2.8 per cent compared with 3.0 per cent the previous month, as mortgage costs continue to slide.

The chief cause of the rise was an 11 per cent jump in seasonal food prices. Household goods prices also climbed as retailers tried to push through pre-Christmas price rises.

The figures pushed the pound higher. The euro fell to 69.99p against sterling, its lowest closing level, while the pound also rose from \$1.6515 to \$1.6533.

The data, coupled with the problems in Brazil, helped to depress the stock market, with the FTSE 100 closing down 96.3 points to 6,027.8.

City analysts and business groups were quick, however, to claim the figures were a blip and that the Bank should not hold off from making further rate cuts.

Kate Barker, chief economic adviser to the CBI, said: "We expect inflation to move below the Government's target and believe interest rates should be reduced towards 5 per cent by the spring."

Separate data showed a larger than expected public sector net cash requirement of £2.2 billion in December. Economists said, however, that the Government remains on target to post a healthy full-year surplus.

Commentary, page 25

BRITISH AEROSPACE was yesterday hit by accusations that its £7 billion merger with the Marconi Electronic Systems arm of GEC has damaged British, German and French Government hopes of greater industrial co-operation within Europe.

British Aerospace shares also fell nearly 14 per cent, wiping about £750 million from the original value of its bid, and claims it had overpaid.

The Marconi deal will create the world's third-biggest aerospace company by sales, behind Boeing and Lockheed Martin of the US.

Before Christmas, BAE had been in merger talks with Dasa, the German aerospace group owned by DaimlerChrysler, but these were left behind when GEC emerged as a willing suitor.

Yesterday, the jilted Dasa gave warning: "If the BAE/GEC merger proceeds as announced, it will make balanced European horizontal mergers such as Dasa-BAE impossible and create an obstacle to European integration."

One analyst at a London broker said the decision to link the

two British companies would delay European consolidation. The UK Government is keen for cross-border alliances to be formed.

GEC will demerge Marconi and Electronic Systems before selling it. GEC shareholders will then exchange their stake in Marconi for 1.17 billion new shares in BAE - about 36.7 per cent of the merged group, which will be known as New British Aerospace.

They will also get about £440 million of loan stock. Marconi will also be loaded with £1.55 billion of net debt, releasing cash to the rump GEC group, which will focus on telecommunications and electronics.

Lord Simpson of Dunkeld, the chief executive of GEC, played down speculation that

GEC might bid for Bae's telecoms arm. He will have £2.657 billion in cash for acquisitions and said yesterday that it is his intention to create a business twice the size of "old GEC" before he retires.

Lord Simpson, 56, is better known for disposing of businesses than buying them. He managed the sale of Rover to BMW when at British Aerospace. He said: "I hope people are going to see the business development side of George Simpson." Low-growth businesses at GEC, such as its Hotpoint washing machines arm, will be placed in a new division, GEC Capital.

BAE responded to claims that it had overpaid by saying the deal should lead to annual

cost savings of £275 million by the third year, although there will be a one-off £200 million cost to achieve this. Marconi Electronic Systems had sales of £3.685 billion in 1998, making a profit of £418 million before tax and interest. BAE still wants to merge with Dasa.

New British Aerospace will employ about 100,000 people and have a turnover of £12.4 billion and profits of £968 million on 1997 figures. John Weston, chief executive of BAE, said few job losses were likely. Earnings per share should be enhanced by more than 10 per cent in the third year with neutral effect in the first year.

GEC will keep the Marconi brand name. Michael Lester and Sir Charles Massfield will join Peter Gershon, the Marconi Electronic Systems managing

director in moving from the GEC board to the New BAE board.

Michael Blogg, an analyst at Charterhouse Titney, said: "I think BAE has paid a full price but strategically I think they can justify it." Panmure Gordon, the broker, said it welcomed the deal.

Another analyst, who preferred not to be named, said BAE had "very much" overpaid: "A fairer price would have been £6 billion."

It is not yet clear whether the European Commission or the UK Government will have jurisdiction over the deal.

It is understood that the Government will refuse to say that the merger will escape a referral to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in answer to a parliamentary question tomorrow.

It is also not yet clear how much will be paid to the advisers on the deal. BAE employed Dresdner Kleinwort Benson and Goldman Sachs. GEC employed Warburg Dillon Read and Morgan Stanley.

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Europe cries foul, page 27

Grid looks for £1.2bn from sale of Energis

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

NATIONAL GRID is to raise £1.2 billion by selling a chunk of Energis, the telecoms company, in a move that will fund a rapid expansion in the US and other overseas markets.

It could spend £500 million of the proceeds as early as next month on an electricity business in Massachusetts. Stephen Box, finance director, revealed that the company, which controls electricity transmission, was close to a second purchase in New England after its £2.7 billion takeover of New England Electricity System, which was announced last month.

The sale of up to 75 million shares in Energis - in which the Grid has a 75 per cent stake - should net about £800 million profit for the company and will be in two tranches. The Grid will simultaneously convert its Energis preference shares to ordinary shares and reduce its holding to between 45 per cent and 49 per cent.

The sale has been prompted by the soaring value of telecoms shares and the wish to bring more liquidity into Energis.

Energis shares, which were floated in December 1997 at 290p, leapt from £15.22 to £16.55. National Grid shares rose 18p to 545p.

Tempus and markets, page 26

Mirror calls for two valuations

THE Mirror Group board has called for two independent valuations of the company to set a base line for takeover negotiations (Raymond Snoddy writes).

The valuations of the group, whose titles include *The Mirror*, *Sunday Mirror* and *The People*, should be available before the end of this week.

The bid approach by Regional Independent Media, publisher of the *Yorkshire Post*, suggests a value of about £900 million, a figure that does not include debt. Trinity, a rival regional newspaper group, withdrew from bid talks with Mirror Group earlier this month.

Brazilians lift interest to 41%

By GABRIELLA GAMINI AND ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE Brazilian Central Bank yesterday lifted interest rates as the Government vowed that it would not let Brazil's currency devaluation undermine its battle against inflation.

The rise in the bank's key lending rate, from 29 per cent to 41 per cent, dashed hopes of the bank cutting rates to kick-start the world's eighth-largest economy.

International markets responded nervously, with Wall Street falling sharply after a bright opening. The Dow Jones industrial average was down about 75 points at midday. The French and German markets ended modestly down, and the dollar came under pressure as traders switched into "safe haven" currencies, such as the Swiss franc.

The Brazilian currency, the real, slipped to about 1.61 to the dollar, before stabilising at

Sunshine back at Club Med

By MARTIN BARROW

PHILIPPE Bourguignon, the Frenchman credited with rescuing Euro Disney, appears to have pulled another ailing leisure company back from the brink.

Club Med, the resort group, yesterday reported a return to profit after attracting thousands of tourists back to its fun-in-the-sun holiday villages.

Price cuts of up to 30 per cent, renovated resorts and some new destinations have revitalised Club Med. The group had seemed to have been struck a fatal blow by a new generation of resort companies - and the changing tastes of tourists, who were deserting beaches in search of activity holidays in exotic spots.

However, M. Bourguignon has proved doubters wrong. His strategy pulled in 116,000 extra customers last year, a

Maggots, food of the cods?

By SAIED SHAH

THE VAT man is having to roll up his sleeves and get to grips with maggots.

The VAT Tribunal, having determined that a Jaffa Cake was a cake and not a biscuit, must now rule whether maggots could be considered to be food. The outcome could have a significant financial bearing on the pet food and animal feed markets.

The tribunal is considering an appeal by an Essex company trading as Mag-it, a supplier of live maggots for anglers. The company, whose slogan is "Mag-it with Mag-it" had argued that maggots were food, because fish eat them and, as a result, should be zero-rated for VAT purposes in common with most animal feeds.

But the VAT man disagreed, saying the primary purpose of maggots was not to feed the

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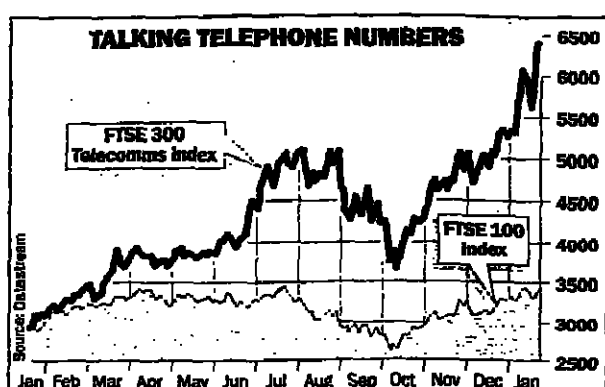
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Why now looks a good time to hang on to telecoms



By CHRIS AYRES

INVESTORS in telecom companies such as Vodafone, Orange, BT, Colt and Energis face a dilemma. Do they sell now in the belief that share prices cannot be sustained at current high levels or hold tight and hope that this is simply the beginning of an exciting long-term trend?

Before making a decision on whether to hold on to telecoms stocks, investors should consider the shockingly brief stock market history of Iridium, the Cambridge telephone company, Iridium was valued at \$660 million following its much-hyped flotation during the summer of 1997, and collapsed only 15 months later. Yet few big telecoms companies suffer from the managerial and

technical problems that caused Iridium's downfall. The growth of companies such as Colt and Energis are also fuelled by markets that Iridium was never poised to take advantage of — in particular, the Internet, e-mail, corporate intranet systems, and e-commerce (transactions conducted online).

So far, this demand comes mainly from the business world, but will soon be complemented by consumer demand as more people hook-up to the Internet at home, and subscribe to interactive television services. If all this looks like a good reason to buy into the telecoms sector, it looks like an even better

reason to buy into the mobile telephone sector. All the signs so far suggest that the market penetration of mobile phone companies will double within four years to 50 per cent in most Western countries.

At the same time, new technology will allow mobile phone companies to also cash-in on the demand for data. Conducting a video conference via a mobile phone handset looks set to become a reality within a few years.

It is worth remembering, however, that companies such as Colt and Energis, whose share prices are based entirely on profits that have not yet been

made, are very different to the likes of Vodafone and BT. During a crash, shares in Colt and Energis would be highly vulnerable, as investors tend to pile into cash-generative companies such as supermarket chains and cigarette manufacturers.

However, all the evidence would suggest so far that the likes of Colt and Energis can survive stock market volatility. After all, it will take years for the demand for Internet-related services to be satisfied, and for the glamour surrounding companies in the sector to wear off.

Continued, page 25

Anger as RJB asks miners to reject EU rights

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

RJB MINING has asked all its miners to sign away employment rights under the EU's Working Time Directive. The move has provoked further anger as the company faces two union ballots for industrial action in protest over a pay plan.

The company asked its 6,500 miners to "take steps to work their normal hours". This means signing an opt-out clause from the Working Time Directive, which rules that workers should not work more than 48 hours per week. Those who stick to their rights are likely to see their pay cut.

RJB said that some miners work extra hours on a standard 7½-hour shift and undertake overtime shifts to push their working weeks regularly past 50 hours.

Nacods, the pit deputies' union, claims that its members are being pressurised by RJB and are being accused of an overtime ban when they are only exercising rights under the directive, which came into force last October.

The union said that safety could be jeopardised because pit officials were often required to work seven days a week to provide adequate cover in collieries.

Jan Parker, the president of the union's Yorkshire area, said: "This union will not sit idly by and watch its members being victimised by RJB Mining."

"If the company wishes to enter into the spirit of the Working Time Directive and negotiate on it, the union is always willing to listen, but up

to the present time, the company has only taken a one-sided view."

RJB said that it had had some positive responses to its letter, mainly from the Midlands area. A spokesman said that the company wished to continue normal hours and that Richard Budge, its chief executive, was anxious for miners to spend more time with their families.

RJB employees will vote next month in ballots that could trigger the first miners' strike for 15 years. Both the National Union of Mineworkers and the Union of Democratic Mineworkers are balloting their members on possible action.

RJB has offered a pay rise of inflation minus 1 per cent for five years. Miners have pointed to the wide gap between their offer and Mr Budge's pay in 1997 — the latest published figure for his salary. He earned £610,000 that year, including a bonus of £224,460, despite a 75 per cent slump in RJB's share price and a 9 per cent fall in profits.



Sir Peter Davis said that the figures were creditable

Pru sees 13% rise in new business

By RICHARD MILES

PRUDENTIAL yesterday reported a 13 per cent rise in UK new business to £785 million, largely reflecting the first-time inclusion of a full year from Scottish Amicable, the life insurer it acquired 16 months ago for £2.8 billion.

Scottish Amicable, which distributes its products through independent financial advisers, contributed £163.5 million in weighted premiums (regular premiums plus 10 per cent of single), a rise of 24 per cent year-on-year.

However, Prudential's traditional direct sales new business was unchanged at £306 million. Salesforce numbers have fallen to 3,200 from 4,600 from the start of the year.

The Pru also said that Egg, the innovative banking service launched last autumn, had attracted £1.3 billion in deposits. Total banking deposits at the company now amount to £22 billion, while mortgage advances have grown to £500 million.

Sir Peter Davis, group chief executive, said the figures were a "credible performance" against a background of economic uncertainty.

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Struggling Mitsui Trust to merge

TWO troubled Japanese banks are to merge as the country's financial sector edges towards further reform. Mitsui Trust and Banking is to merge with Chuo Trust and Banking to form Japan's largest trust bank with assets of about £241 billion and 170 branch offices. Mitsui Trust is by far the larger of the two banks and ranks as the third biggest of Japan's trust banks, which are in charge of managing pension funds.

Many of Japan's top banks, saddled with huge bad loans, have struggled in the past year. Already the Government has forcibly nationalised two banks after they failed to agree merger deals with the state. Nippon Credit Bank, the last bank to be taken over by the state, had tried to merge with Chuo Trust. But Chuo pulled out, apparently scared off by Nippon's market losses and poor financial position. Under reforms passed last October, banks have been encouraged to ask for injections of taxpayers' money to help them to write off bad loans. Mitsui will ask for about £1.1 billion, while Chuo will seek £691 million.

Hanson looks to US

HANSON, the Anglo-American building materials group, could spend £200 million on acquisitions over the next year or so, focusing its growth strategy on the buoyant US market. Andrew Dougal, chief executive, yesterday said that he expected the US market to continue growing, helped by a government programme to increase spending on infrastructure projects by 40 per cent over the next six years. The group yesterday unveiled a new unified corporate structure, changing the name of each of its operating companies to Hanson.

Debenham Tewson up

DEBENHAM TEWSON & CHIMMOCKS HOLDINGS, the property consultancy, said that it is confident of continued progress in the second half of its year despite uncertainties in the UK and abroad. The company reported a pre-tax profit of £4.68 million for the half-year to October 31, up from £3.16 million a year earlier. The interim dividend rises to 15p, from 13p. Turnover was £45.98 million (£36.73 million). Earnings per share were 5.29p (4.26p).

Victory losses deepen

VICTORY CORPORATION, the clothing, cosmetics and toiletries retailer which trades under the Virgin brand, said it was unlikely to open additional outlets this year in the light of difficult trading conditions. The company reported increased losses of £10.9 million for the half-year to September 30, compared with a £3.5 million loss previously. The company attributed 40 per cent of the deficit to a £4 million investment in the launch of its clothing business.

Eidos shares surge

SHARES in Eidos rose 65p to £1.65 yesterday after the publisher of entertainment software reported exceptionally strong demand in the three months to December 31. The company said that it had supplied in excess of six million units, well ahead of expectations. Titles released in the quarter included *Michael Owen's World League Soccer*, *Tomb Raider 3* and *Thief: The Dark Project*. Eidos shares have recovered strongly since touching a 12-month low of 55p in October.

Dagenham accepts bid

DAGENHAM MOTORS, the UK's biggest dedicated Ford car dealer, has accepted a £28.3 million takeover bid by Polar Motor Group, a joint venture between Ford and Jardine Motors. The 160p-a-share cash offer represents a 35 per cent premium to Dagenham's stock market value last September when a potential offer was announced. Dagenham has 16 Ford car and van dealerships and three Iveco Ford commercial vehicle dealerships in the South East of England.



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ECB remains vague on rates

By ALASDAIR MURRAY, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE European Central Bank yesterday warned that global economic problems could hit Europe harder than expected but gave few clues as to the immediate outlook for European interest rates.

In its first monthly bulletin, the ECB stuck to its favoured formula that rates would remain unchanged for the "foreseeable future", arguing the threat of higher inflation is as significant as slowing output.

The negative repercussions of recent global developments on economic growth in the euro area could turn out to be more serious than currently anticipated", the report said.

The ECB said it was clear from recent data that economic growth is slowing and said industrial confidence had declined "significantly". However,

it insisted that that loose fiscal policies and rising wages could still add to inflation.

"Wage demands in excess of labour productivity growth and a relaxation of the fiscal stance in the euro area could represent sources of inflationary risk in the future", the report said.

The ECB also cited a potential inflationary threat from buoyant consumer confidence but concluded that the overall outlook "for price developments in the euro area can be regarded as broadly balanced".

Analysts said the ECB appears intent on providing only limited guidance on interest rates but that there was nothing in the report to prevent a widely forecast cut in rates as early as next month.

US brokers and banks resilient

By RICHARD MILES

WALL STREET banks and brokers performed ahead of analysts' expectations in the fourth quarter, despite volatility in financial markets and uncertainty about the global economic outlook.

Merrill Lynch, the biggest broker in the US, reported a 23 per cent fall in fourth-quarter net earnings to \$359 million (£216 million), but the results easily beat the consensus forecast by more than 30 per cent.

However, Merrill said that private client assets, assets under management and mergers & acquisition activity all hit record levels.

Principal transactions revenues slumped 66 per cent to \$211 million. Merrill said continuing wide credit spreads and reduced liquidity contributed to losses in corporate and

high-yield bonds, as well as mortgage-backed securities.

Chase Manhattan also exceeded market expectations with a 35 per cent rise in fourth-quarter net earnings to \$1.146 billion. Net profit per share was \$1.31 compared with banking analysts' forecasts of \$1.19.

It was the same story at JP Morgan, where fourth-quarter earnings were 42 cents per share against a forecast of 35 cents, and at PaineWebber, where earnings were 63 cents per share compared with a consensus of 54 cents.

Bear Stearns reported a 15 per cent drop in second-quarter net earnings to \$135.9 million as investment banking fees collapsed, but the firm managed to beat forecasts, which had been scaled back after the summer's financial turmoil.

Unigate buys Fisher subsidiary

By ROBERT COLE CITY CORRESPONDENT

ALBERT FISHER, the troubled food producer, has sold its saucemaking business to Unigate for £43 million.

Fisher, which has issued a string of profits warnings in recent years, also told investors yesterday that its profitability is under further strain. Hugh Ashton, chairman, said: "Management figures for the first four months of the current financial

year are substantially below the like-for-like figures for the comparable period."

Proceeds of the sauces sale will be used to cut group debt, which was £147 million at the end of the last financial year, on 31 August. The sale is the first significant corporate move undertaken since Terry Robinson, formerly with Lorrain, took up the position of chief executive at Fisher.

Mr Robinson said that the sale of Fisher Quality Foods would be followed by other disposals, of the company's seafood

operation on the Continent, and of the chilled foods business. He said: "The sale... is the first major step in Albert Fisher's strategic plan to reduce group debt and restore shareholder value."

FQF's purchase price includes assumption of £16 million of debt, and is equivalent to almost ten times the subsidiary's £4.4 million operating profit for 1998.

Fisher shares closed down 4p at 54p.

Tempus, page 26

Bank	Bank	Bank	Bank
Australia	2.65	18.03	203.51
Austria	20.08	85.94	0.694
Belgium	80.90	2.401	0.005
Canada	2.64	0.838	3.244
Cyprus	0.674	11.29	3.24
Denmark	11.29	10.34	0.005
Egypt	5.85	5.24	0.005
Finland	0.05	6.31	12.52
France	0.05	6.31	12.52
Germany	2.98	2.719	2.719
Greece	1.08	4.49	2.719
Hong Kong	1.08	1.08	2.719
Ireland	1.08	1.08	2.719
Indonesia	1.08	1.08	2.719
Israel	1.08	1.08	2.719
Italy	1.08	1.08	2.719

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COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Forget plans to create a European defence giant: what is needed now is a peace-keeping force. Relations between the British and German participants in the much discussed Euro-grouping have soured to the extent that K&N is likely to be parachuted in to report on the hostilities at any moment.

The furious reaction of DaimlerChrysler's Jürgen Schrempp to the British Aerospace deal with Marconi indicates that his view of the balance of power in any Euro defence combine might not have concurred exactly with that of Sir Richard Evans. Sir Richard will now have to indulge in a little diplomacy if he wants to persuade the Germans and the French that the wisdom of them all joining forces remains intact. He will have to be extra tactful not to remind them that he is making the case from a much stronger position than before. Injured feelings are likely to ensure that the timetable for any formal coming together is now significantly lengthened.

But neither the Continental peevishness nor the British stock market's reaction over the £8 billion merger does anything to detract from the reputation of Lord Simpson of Dunkeld as a seller of businesses. British Aerospace might not have been in a position to do the deal if he had not, as the culmination of his time with the group, sold Rover to BMW. It took him barely any time to turn

Lucas into LucasVarity, a deal which Victor Rice seems convinced was a takeover by any other name. Now, after a couple of years at the helm of GEC, he is selling its defence business to his old firm.

The two form a logical combine but by not rushing to clinch the deal, Lord Simpson has secured a better price than he might have done. The protestations from Germany owe more than a little to the feeling that Dasa has been a useful part of his negotiating process rather than a serious contender to complete the deal.

The challenge of building a future in the hugely competitive defence business now rests with Sir Richard Evans. Given that Gordon Brown is unlikely to favour throwing extra billions at the UK defence budget, that will be no easy task. Given that the biggest orders are more likely to come from far flung parts than from Europe, it could be argued that he would do as well to try and pursue links with the United States rather than Europe.

Lord Simpson will be blissfully free of the political considerations that inevitably dominate the defence business. He intends

to roam free around the world building new GEC. It will, naturally, be a telecommunications business — who would want to build anything else at the moment? And it will be the test of whether he can build businesses as well as sell them.

Lord Westminster was absolutely determined that Simpson would be his successor. Now the chosen one has a chance to demonstrate the talent he spotted.

Just what the doctor ordered

Mobile phones may suddenly have become a subject of intense interest round at Zeneca's Stanhope Gate headquarters. Received wisdom has it that no one will seek to spoil Zeneca's £45 billion merger with Astra — partly because Sir David Barnes and Tom McKillop are so gaily with their Swedish charms, but also because

of the goodwill problem that stands in the way of any hostile takeover. A bid would produce £30 billion of goodwill, creating an annual amortisation charge to profits of perhaps £1.5 billion. Even the mighty Glaxo Wellcome and Roche would think twice before taking on such a millstone.

However, the enthusiastic response that greeted Vodafone's £37.5 billion bid for AirTouch may have changed the rules of the game. Vodafone's investors seem to have completely ignored the prospect of an annual charge of £2 billion, focusing instead on the strategic benefits backed by strong and growing cashflow. If mobile phone investors are prepared to ignore the profit and loss account, perhaps Zeneca is more vulnerable than it looks.

Goldman Sachs, Zeneca's adviser, remains quietly confident its carefully prepared merger plans will not be thrown off course. For one thing, analysts and investors in the go-go tele-

coms sector are more comfortable with heavily loss-making companies than their more staid colleagues in pharmaceuticals, who still focus on traditional measures of earnings.

More compellingly, acquiring Zeneca (or Astra) may lack strategic logic for the possible bidders. Zeneca is too small to enable Glaxo Wellcome to achieve its growth goals; SmithKline Beecham is still licking its wounds while Roche appears to have ruled itself out of the bidding. And American companies such as Eli Lilly and Warner-Lambert may not be attracted by firms with patent expiry problems that are heavily dependent on the slower growing European market.

The Astra-Zeneca bond has been slowly forged and may be hard to break: the two companies' claims to a shared culture ring true. Combining their portfolios of cardiovascular and anaesthetic drugs also makes sense.

The betting remains that the deal will go through and that Dr McKillop will have his chance to run the world's third-largest drugs group. But as Zeneca prepares to issue its merger document, he could be forgiven for fumbling nervously with his Vodafone.

Brazil should say nuts to depression

Brazilians doubtless hope that devaluation will ease the pain endured in their vain attempt to maintain the value of the real and to keep foreign investors happy. They might even look to the UK experience after 1992 for reassurance.

If so, they will be disappointed. Their suffering from shrinking public services, mass firing and even freak weather, which tempted populist provincial governors to dish the austerity programme, seems destined to get worse — at least for a while.

The classic adjustment model, which worked here, suggests that Brazil should now cut interest rates but tighten its fiscal stance even further to sustain the currency and leave room for non-

inflationary recovery. But so far, short-term interest rates have jumped from 29 to 40 per cent, while those provincial governors and opposition legislators seem far from inclined to help Finance Minister Pedro Malan to balance his federal Budget. This appears to be a recipe for spiralling recession on the Asian model.

One reason the Government was so anxious to avoid the real sinking was the country's heavy foreign debt, both private and public. City economist Stephen Lewis reckons that servicing it could absorb an extra 4 per cent of national income, that could only be recouped if domestic interest rates fell. Now, unless the Budget can be righted by political consensus or a national fire sale, Brazil could stay in crisis, taking others with it.

Self-inflicted

DON'T blame potatoes. Furniture and household goods' retailers, it seems, pushed prices up before Christmas, perhaps ending autumn discounts, perhaps preparing for bigger percentage cuts in the sales. Either way, it could be costly. The price rises pushed underlying inflation above target, making it far less likely that the Bank of England will rush through another base rate cut next month. That would be bad news for household goods shops, heralding spring discounts to recoup lost sales. Serves them right.

Watchdog demands rights for savers

Consumers need "a no-quibble legal right to redress" if they buy a personal pension or savings plan that does not come up to scratch, a leading public rights group demands in a report published today.

The National Consumer Council (NCC) says that the draft Financial Services and Markets Bill, which will give statutory powers to the new regulatory body, fails to provide adequate protection for the buying public.

David Hatch, NCC chairman, argues that the Bill should contain a set of consumer protection principles, similar to those that underpin the 1979 Sale of Goods Act. The public has more legal clout if sold a faulty kettle than if a pension or insurance policy fails to meet accepted standards.

GPE debenture
Great Portland Estates, the property group, yesterday announced the issue of £100 million first mortgage debenture stock due in 2029. It will be issued at a 1.35 per cent margin over the gross redemption yield of the 6 per cent Treasury stock 2028. Richard Peskin, chairman, said: "We have one or two interesting situations on the go. This seemed an ideal opportunity to raise £100 million for 30 years at the lowest domestic coupon for decades."

Zergo shares soar
Shares in Zergo Holdings, the company that produces software to encrypt information sent over the Internet, soared 30 per cent to 702½p after signing a licensing agreement with Intel Corporation, the US microchip giant. Zergo will market Intel's Common Data Security Architecture (CDSA) technology, which allows software developers to make trading over the Internet secure. Zergo shares traded at just 165p last December.

Key Lekkerland
Goodwins, the Key Lekkerland member for the North West and West Midlands that was recently acquired by BWG, does not operate Spar or Mace retail outlets (Business News, January 9).

Somerfield to expand chain at Elf garages

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

SOMERFIELD, the supermarket group, is to double the number of its stores offering home delivery over the next six months and it is planning a big expansion of its chain of stores at petrol stations.

The company, which bought Kwik Save last March and announced better than expected interim results yesterday, said that it is to open up to 50 stores at Elf petrol stations in the next 18 months. There are currently five Elf stores and Somerfield will share in an investment of £25 million.

Somerfield's home delivery service, in which people buy their shopping in stores and have it delivered later that day, now operates in 150 stores, a rise of 90 in six months. The total will rise to 300 by the financial year's end.

Assuming that Somerfield had owned Kwik Save in the first half of last year, group interim pre-tax profits rose by more than 30 per cent to £113.8 million. Reported pre-tax profits before exceptional items rose 100 per cent, from £56.8 million.

David Simons, the chief executive, said that Somerfield is in line to produce the forecast savings from the Kwik Save merger, of £70 million a year, within three years. Within the half-year, synergy savings of £7 million had been made, the company said.

The company has now converted ten of Kwik Save's 872 stores to the Somerfield format, and will convert 53 more by Easter. It has shut 14 stores in total in the first half, and the group now trades from 1,423.

Fully diluted earnings per share fell from 17.3p to 16.8p, but the interim dividend is to rise from 3.8p to 4.5p.

Like-for-like sales in Somerfield fascia stores grew 3.4 per cent in the first half, but by just 1.7 per cent at Christmas. Mr Simons said that this dip in growth tended to occur each year because people made trips to superstores, such as

Tesco and Sainsbury, to stock up for Christmas, rather than relying on high street shops such as Somerfield.

Kwik Save sales fell 3.1 per cent in the first half. The group said it expects the trend to stay negative, particularly because preparing stores for conversion to the Somerfield format will disrupt trading.

□ Dawn Til Dusk Holdings, a supermarket and fresh food group, said like-for-like sales rose by 0.23 per cent at Christmas, with year-to-date sales 0.73 per cent behind last year. In the six months to October 16, pre-tax profits rose to £316,000, from £301,000, on turnover up 25 per cent to £32.6 million. Earnings per share fell to 4.4p, from 5.6p, which was attributed to effects of a rights issue. The interim dividend is 1.5p, up from 1.4p.

Tempos, page 26



Cult classic: Thunderbirds, part of the ITC library, which has doubled Carlton's collection

Carlton is go with £91m ITC library deal

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

CARLTON Communications has boosted significantly its library of television programmes and feature films with its £150 million (£91 million) purchase of the old ITC library, until recently part of PolyGram Filmed Entertainment.

The titles bought range from feature films such as *The Eagle Has Landed*, *The Big Easy*, *On Golden Pond* and *Farewell My Lovely* to television programmes such as *The Saint*, *Edward VII* and *Thunderbirds*.

The stock more than 300 films and 5,000 hours of television boosts the size of Carlton's library by more than 50 per cent, and, Carlton said, strengthened its position as "the world's largest commercial distributor of British television programmes and films".

The ITC library became available because of the purchase of PolyGram, including PolyGram Filmed Entertainment, by Seagram.

The library ended up with Universal Studios, the Seagram film-making subsidiary.

Carlton kept close to poten-

tial bidders for PolyGram Filmed Entertainment but really only wanted to buy the ITC library, which was put together by the late Lord Lew Grade.

Michael Green, the Carlton chairman, said yesterday the ITC library "fits perfectly with our growing collection of television programmes and films".

A key part of Carlton's strategy has been to accumulate programme rights and its library already includes the Rank, Romulus, Rohauer and Korda collections.

Carlton said the new library, expected to have sales of about £8 million to £10 million a year, would be at least earnings-enhancing in the current financial year.

Carlton's annual report, published yesterday, showed Mr Green's salary increased by £55,000 to £530,000 in the year to September. His total remuneration rose from £558,000 to £658,000 including a £57,000 bonus.

The next highest paid director was June de Moller, who is retiring as group managing director, with total remuneration of £351,000.

Body Shop hit by poor sales

By MATTHEW BARBOUR

BODY SHOP, the cosmetics retailer, yesterday became the latest victim of disappointing high street sales, when it gave warning that Christmas trading in the UK would put a dent in full-year profits.

The company said that like-for-like sales in the ten weeks to January 2 were down 2 per cent. There had been a 6 per cent decline in the UK and a 9 per cent decline in America.

Patrick Gournay, chief executive, also revealed that he would be announcing long-awaited plans for an overhaul of the group on Tuesday, prompting speculation of a carve-up of its US operations.

City analysts slashed their full-year profit forecasts from

£31.5 million to as low as £25 million.

Mr Gournay said the slowdown in UK sales reflected the wider slowdown in retailing over the holiday period and that sales in Europe, the Far East and Canada were improving. However, sales in Asia remained on a downward slope, though a 9 per cent drop in sales represented an improvement on recent double-digit decreases.

Worldwide, Body Shop saw sales rise by 1 per cent in the ten weeks to January 2 and by 3 per cent over the preceding 44 weeks. "The poor performance in the US will be offset by our cost-reduction scheme," promised Mr Gournay.

Still optimistic at Debenhams

By MATTHEW BARBOUR

STRONG sales of gifts and non-clothing products and a decision to delay discounts until December 27 helped Debenhams, the department store group, to withstand the worst of the high street gloom over Christmas.

The group said that in the 20 weeks to January 16 like-for-like sales, excluding sales from new store space, were down 2.5 per cent on the previous year.

However it added that the figures would have been considerably worse without a 30 per cent jump in Christmas gift sales as well as strong growth in designer lines. Total sales were ahead by 1.4 per cent.

Peter Jarvis, the chairman, said: "The retail trading environment remains challenging and it is difficult to predict how it will develop over the next few months. However, we remain confident with our well-established and proven strategy."

Debenhams was demerged from Burton Group, now Arcadia, a year ago. Arcadia, which includes clothing chains such as Top Shop, Dorothy Perkins, Primaries and Raging Green, will release its own trading statement tomorrow.

Investors reacted positively to the news and shares of Debenhams yesterday closed up 3 per cent at 350½p.

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Boost for Energis on the eve of promotion

THE City institutions have got themselves in a mess over Energis, up 132p to £16.55. National Grid is selling up to 75 million shares in order to drop its stake below 50 per cent.

Brokers were testing the water ahead of the placing yesterday. Once it is complete, Energis will be catapulted into the top 100 companies where it will be valued at £3.7 billion.

Unfortunately, most institutions do not have anywhere near the weighting in the shares they would require for a blue chip. The price looks set to climb higher in the short term. National Grid rose 17p to 545p.

Share prices generally went into reverse, worried by the latest rise in Brazilian interest rates and unimpressed by suggestions that the latest inflation numbers had undermined the prospect of another cut in domestic rates by the Bank of England.

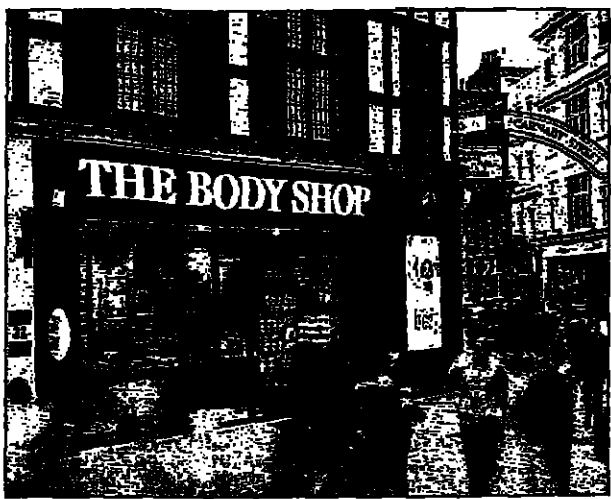
Early losses on Wall Street left prices in London deep in the red although UK shares closed above their lows. The FTSE 100 index lost an early lead but managed to stay above the 6,000 level. It closed 96.3 down at 6,027.6. Turnover again exceeded more than a billion shares with the FTSE 250 index losing 29.2 at 4,874.6.

Brokers and fund managers expressed a degree of caution over the British Aerospace acquisition of GEC's Marconi defence arm for £7.7 billion. BAE was the worst performer among the top 100 with the price losing 68p at 435p, while GEC shed 31p at 546p.

Now the speculators are tipping GEC to bid for Racal Electronics, up 18p at 386p. There has been plenty of speculation in Racal shares in recent months with followers convinced that outgoing chairman Sir Ernest Harrison is ready to go out on a high note.

This week's gloomy trading update from Nestlé could have an impact on rival Unilever, 51p easier at 648p. The Swiss group reported signs of a slowdown in its main markets during the fourth quarter.

Cautious comments by HSBC Securities, the broker, about prospects left Diageo 11p down at 670p. It has reiterated its "sell" recommendation and set a target price for the shares of 540p. There was big turnover in merger candidate Lasso with the price leading 31p to 103p as several large lines of stock went through the



Body Shop retreated 4p to 85p as brokers cut their forecasts for the current year in the wake of a profits warning

market. They included two parcels of 7.6 million at 9.16 million at 102p. By the close of business a total of 20.6 million had been traded. Enterprise Oil, which is merging with Lasso, eased 4p to 255p.

Hopes of a bid drove House of Fraser up 15p to 88p. City speculators say the department stores group could go the same way as rival Sears, unchanged at 348p, which is facing a contested bid from a consortium headed by retailer Philip Green. Both companies have several things in common — they have Phillips & Drew as a major shareholder and have seen their share price under pressure.

Phillips & Drew is also playing a big role in the fate of Mirror Group, 1/2p dearer at

206p. It has rejected a cash bid of 200p from Regional Independent Media and would prefer to back an all-share offer from Trinity International, up 1p to 431p.

Body Shop retreated 4p to 85p as brokers cut their forecasts for the current year in the wake of a profits warning

Shares of AIM-listed On-Line soared a further 39p to a peak of 172p as the clamour for Internet providers showed few signs of subsiding. The price has now risen more than tenfold in less than two weeks.

Over on AIM, the high-tech buyers were chasing Virtual Internet. It follows the reverse takeover of Charriot, which was suspended at 117p in November. The price touched a peak of 382p before closing at 311p, a rise of 19p.

The bulls are falling over themselves to pick up more shares in Zango Holdings, 162p dearer at 102p. The information and technology specialists clinched two separate deals with Price Waterhouse Coopers, the accountant, and Intel, the microchip manufacturer.

Senior Engineering was an early casualty losing 6p at 99p as one seller unloaded a line of 1.17 million shares at 97p.

GIIT-EDGED: The prospect of another cut in interest rates suffered a setback after news of an unexpected rise in the underlying inflation rate. The bond market gave up an early lead with rate-sensitive, shorter-dated issues suffering heaviest losses as prices closed mixed.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt fell 5p to £191.31 as a total of 31,000 contracts were completed.

Among conventional issues, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 put on 32p at £151.30, while at the shorter end Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was 17p down at £107.73.

NEW YORK: Caution on Brazil and profit-taking in the banking sector forced shares lower in morning trading. By midday the Dow Jones Industrial average was down 88.06 at 9,252.49.

STORM CLOUDS GATHER

FTSE 250 Insurance Index

FTSE all-share Index (rebased)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan

THERE was a mixed response in the insurance sector to another round of profit downgrades.

CGU fell 30p to 881p as Morgan Stanley Dean Witter cut its forecast of operating profits for 1998 from £562 million to £500 million, blaming bad weather and higher claims.

Charterhouse Tilney, the broker, has also reduced its forecast by 19 per cent to £500 million. Both Charterhouse and Morgan Stanley have taken their red pencils to profit forecasts for Royal

& Sun Alliance, up 51p at 481p. They have cut from £470 million to £382 million and from £419 million to £381 million respectively.

CGU and RSA both reported a profits downgrade at the nine-month stage in November, which prompted a revision of profit numbers in the sector.

Allied Zurich retreated 14p to 915p, but Guardian Royal Exchange was steady at 348p, still awaiting terms, thought to be of about 390p a share, from AXA, the French insurer.

FTSE 100

FTSE 250

FTSE 100

FTSE 250

FTSE 100

FTSE 250

FTSE 100

FTSE 250

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FTSE 100

FTSE 250

FTSE 100

FTSE 250

FTSE 100

FTSE 250

FTSE 100

FTSE 250

FTSE 100

FTSE 250

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 9,252.49 (-88.06)
S&P Composite 1,299.32 (-3.94)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 13,770.44 (-34.62)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 10,280.11 (-112.43)

Amsterdam:
AEX Index 548.88 (+4.67)

Sydney:
All Ordinaries 2,695.8 (-25.4)

Frankfurt:
DAX 5,073.15 (+22.75)

Singapore:
Straits Times 4,020.00 (-20.00)

Brussels:
Euronext 3,470.72 (-7.58)

Paris:
CAC-40 4,115.99 (-35.69)

Zurich:
SIX 1,442.30 (-8.80)

London:
FTSE 100 6,027.6 (-96.3)
FTSE 250 4,874.6 (-29.2)
FTSE All-Share 3,744.1 (-11.0)
FTSE 100 Index 3,744.1 (-11.0)
FTSE 250 Index 4,874.6 (-29.2)
FTSE All-Share Index 3,744.1 (-11.0)

FTSE 100 Value 1,091.7m
FTSE 250 Value 1,091.7m
FTSE All-Share Value 1,091.7m

FTSE 100 Dividend Yield 3.9%
FTSE 250 Dividend Yield 3.9%
FTSE All-Share Dividend Yield 3.9%

FTSE 100 P/E Ratio 15.1
FTSE 250 P/E Ratio 15.1
FTSE All-Share P/E Ratio 15.1

FTSE 100 Beta 1.0
FTSE 250 Beta 1.0
FTSE All-Share Beta 1.0

FTSE 100 Volatility 1.0
FTSE 250 Volatility 1.0
FTSE All-Share Volatility 1.0

FTSE 100 Correlation 1.0
FTSE 250 Correlation 1.0
FTSE All-Share Correlation 1.0

FTSE 100 Skewness 1.0
FTSE 250 Skewness 1.0
FTSE All-Share Skewness 1.0

FTSE 100 Kurtosis 1.0
FTSE 250 Kurtosis 1.0
FTSE All-Share Kurtosis 1.0

FTSE 100 Jarque-Bera 1.0
FTSE 250 Jarque-Bera 1.0
FTSE All-Share Jarque-Bera 1.0

FTSE 100 Ljung-Box 1.0
FTSE 250 Ljung-Box 1.0
FTSE All-Share Ljung-Box 1.0

FTSE 100 ACF 1.0
FTSE 250 ACF 1.0
FTSE All-Share ACF 1.0

FTSE 100 PACF 1.0
FTSE 250 PACF 1.0
FTSE All-Share PACF 1.0

FTSE 100 Q-Q Plot 1.0
FTSE 250 Q-Q Plot 1.0
FTSE All-Share Q-Q Plot 1.0

FTSE 100 Normality Test 1.0
FTSE 250 Normality Test 1.0
FTSE All-Share Normality Test 1.0

FTSE 100 Portmanteau 1.0
FTSE 250 Portmanteau 1.0
FTSE All-Share Portmanteau 1.0

FTSE 100 BDS 1.0
FTSE 250 BDS 1.0
FTSE All-Share BDS 1.0

FTSE 100 BDS-Ljung-Box 1.0
FTSE 250 BDS-Ljung-Box 1.0
FTSE All-Share BDS-Ljung-Box 1.0

FTSE 100 BDS-ACF 1.0
FTSE 250 BDS-ACF 1.0
FTSE All-Share BDS-ACF 1.0

FTSE 100 BDS-PACF 1.0
FTSE 250 BDS-PACF 1.0
FTSE All-Share BDS-PACF 1.0

FTSE 100 BDS-Q-Q Plot 1.0
FTSE 250 BDS-Q-Q Plot 1.0
FTSE All-Share BDS-Q-Q Plot 1.0

FTSE 100 BDS-Normality Test 1.0
FTSE 250 BDS-Normality Test 1.0
FTSE All-Share BDS-Normality Test 1.0

FTSE 100 BDS-Portmanteau 1.0
FTSE 250 BDS-Portmanteau 1.0
FTSE All-Share BDS-Portmanteau 1.0

FTSE 100 BDS-BDS 1.0
FTSE 250 BDS-BDS 1.0
FTSE All-Share BDS-BDS 1.0

FTSE 100 BDS-BDS-Ljung-Box 1.0
FTSE 250 BDS-BDS-Ljung-Box 1.0
FTSE All-Share BDS-BDS-Ljung-Box 1.0

FTSE 100 BDS-BDS-ACF 1.0
FTSE 250 BDS-BDS-ACF 1.0
FTSE All-Share BDS-BDS-ACF 1.0

FTSE 100 BDS-BDS-PACF 1.0
FTSE 250 BDS-BDS-PACF 1.0
FTSE All-Share BDS-BDS-PACF 1.0

Grid locked in by growth

IT IS all go for the National Grid. As the electricity delivery firm waits for the regulatory go-ahead on its planned £2.7 billion acquisition of New England Electricity System (NEES), it reveals plans to raise more than £1 billion from selling a chunk of Energis, the telecommunications company it created from nothing in 1993 to be worth about £4 billion now.

Grid had always intended to sell down its Energis interest — it currently owns 75 per cent. It said last year it would sell within three to five years but the bonanza in telecoms shares — fuelled by the favourable reception of the Vodafone/Airtouch merger — has given Grid the opportunity to move more quickly. Grid locks in some profits from Energis in selling down its stake now. But the structure of the sale means Grid will benefit if Energis shares continue their dizzy dance. The disposal

will come in two parts: one offering of ordinary shares and one of mandatorily exchangeable bonds. The bonds will deliver shares at an amount depending on the market price.

The company is keen to separate its overseas expansion plans from the Energis cash raising. Its expansion plans may not be dependent on releasing value from Energis but it still gives Grid additional strength in its campaign to build its US and Latin American portfolio of businesses. A £500 million deal could soon appear above the horizon and Grid is also committed to pumping £200 million into a consortium that is developing Brazil's telecoms network.

But Grid's US expansion has yet to be proved given the regulatory uncertainty on which the NEES purchase rests, and emerging markets bring their own problems. Only hold.

Somerfield

SOMERFIELD'S shareholders have seen rewards in the past but future prospects remain underpinned by the association with budget quality. Buying Booker could have done irreparable damage to the earlier purchase of Kwik Save. Somerfield's serious market clout, but the firm is still outside the food retailing top flight.

The shares trade on a big discount to retailing peers. They are now on about 11 times' forecast earnings, which is about half the level of the market and a 25 per cent discount to the sector.

Yesterday's interim results did not win Somerfield friends, with enough pro-forma and restated figures to keep analysts' calculations going all day. But the pre-tax profit figure was pleasing and the savings coming in

from combining Kwik Save and Somerfield's operations will bolster full-year profits this year and next. The problem is that, from that point on, it is hard to see what will drive profits.

The dip in sales growth over Christmas was explained away as a seasonal blip, with more people going to big stores such as Tesco for

their big pre-Christmas shop. This is not entirely convincing as both Budgets and the Co-op said that sales went well over Christmas. It is up to Somerfield to come up with something more than a reiteration of the Kwik Save savings to get investors really interested. The shares seem destined to meander. Hold.

KWIK SAVINGS

Somerfield share price

FTSE all-share Index (rebased)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan

Prudential

PRUDENTIAL is not the company it once was. Yesterday's new business figures show that door-to-door sales of pensions and life assurance, the company's "Man from the Pru" traditional backbone business, were flat.

This could be alarming but in fact it is encouraging. Pru's figures reveal that sales through independent financial advisers (IFAs) now account for 60 per cent of new UK business. And IFA sales tend to be of a better quality than policies sold by tied salesforces because they are better sold, and contracts stay on the books longer.

Sir Peter Davis, chief executive, has achieved this switch towards better quality business chiefly through the £2.3 billion acquisition of Scottish Amicable in October 1997. The bravery shown in trumping bids of Abbey National and AMP is paying off.

Other than shoring up the

capital base Sir Peter has also had the sense to leave Scotland. IFAs are touchy about recommending products from a company with competing direct salesforces.

The IFA developments are arguably more important for the financial health of Prudential than the astonishing success of Egg, its direct banking service.

The challenge for the Pru, in common with the industry, is on profit margins. But Egg and IFA sales are welcome extra string, and, with windfalls from the £5 billion orphan estate also on the cards, there is good reason to be in Pru stock.

Albert Fisher

ALBERT FISHER is of more interest as a business school case study than as a serious investment. In examining Fisher's past, budding managers destined to work in defunctary marketplaces will certainly learn how not to do it. And if the company survives and

prosper from here, the story will be required reading in the "back from the dead" MBA module.

Fisher lived up to its reputation as the doyen of profit warners yesterday with another depressing and frank assessment of current trading. Shareholders have come to expect bad news such as this at least once a quarter.

The bitter pill was sugared by news of the £43 million disposal. The sale price is reasonable and brings welcome relief to the company's mountainous debt position.

But debt is still uncomfortably high. Moreover, it has only been reduced with the sale of one of the firm's better businesses and it will only be reduced further if buyers can be found for more of the better assets. Terry Robinson, the new chief executive, is still a long way from making history as the comeback kid. Meanwhile, avoid the shares.

EDITED BY ROBERT COLE

COMMODITIES

LIFFE
COCOA
Mar 99 901.50 May 1004.10
Mar 99 222.50 May 1004.10
Mar 99 901.50 May 1004.10
Mar 99 222.50 May 1004.10
Mar 99 901.50 May 1004.10
Mar 99 222.50 May 1004.10

ROBUSTA COFFEE
Mar 99 160.00 May 161.50
Mar 99 160.00 May 161.50
Mar 99 160.00 May 161.50
Mar 99 160.00 May 161.50
Mar 99 160.00 May 161.50
Mar 99 160.00 May 161.50

WHITE SUGAR (FOB)
Mar 99 22.50 May 23.50
Mar 99 22.50 May 23.50
Mar 99 22.50 May 23.50
Mar 99 22.50 May 23.50
Mar 99 22.50 May 23.50
Mar 99 22.50 May 23.50

MEAT & LIVESTOCK
COMMODITIES
Average prices of major commodities
in London on January 19

(per kg) Sheep 42.50 Cattle 42.50
(per lb) Beef 1.10 Pork 1.10
(per lb) Chicken 1.10 Turkey 1.10
(per lb) Eggs 1.10 Butter 1.10
(per lb) Cheese 1.10 Milk 1.10

(per ton) Wheat 110.00 Barley 110.00
(per ton) Oats 110.00 Rye 110.00
(per ton) Corn 110.00 Soyabean 110.00
(per ton) Sunflower 110.00 Rapeseed 110.00

(per ton) Cotton 110.00 Linseed 110.00
(per ton) Hemp 110.00 Flax 110.00
(per ton) Jute 110.00 Sisal 110.00
(per ton) Rubber 110.00 Gold 110.00

(per ton) Silver 110.00 Platinum 110.00
(per ton) Palladium 110.00 Rhodium 110.00
(per ton) Iridium 110.00 Osmium 110.00
(per ton) Ruthenium 110.00 Technetium 110.00

(per ton) Rhenium 110.00 Dubnium 110.00
(per ton) Seaborgium 110.00 Bohrium 110.00
(per ton) Hassium 110.00 Meitnerium 110.00
(per ton) Darmstadtium 110.00 Roentgenium 110.00

(per ton) Copernicium 110.00 Nihonium 110.00
(per ton) Flerovium 110.00 Livermorium 110.00
(per ton) Tennessine 110.00 Oganesson 110.00
(per ton) Unbinoidium 110.00 Untrium 110.00

(per ton) Unquadium 110.00 Unpentium 110.00
(per ton) Unsextium 110.00 Unseptium 110.00
(per ton) Unoctium 110.00 Unnonium 110.00
(per ton) Undecium 110.00 Undundecium 110.00

(per ton) Untridecium 110.00 Unquadrupium 110.00
(per ton) Unquintupium 110.00 Unsexupium 110.00
(per ton) Unseptupium 110.00 Unoctupium 110.00
(per ton) Unnonupium 110.00 Undecupium 110.00

(per ton) Undecupium 110.00 Untridecupium 110.00
(per ton) Unquadrupium 110.00 Unquintupium 110.00
(per ton) Unsexupium 110.00 Unseptupium 110.00
(per ton) Unoctupium 110.00 Unnonupium 110.00

(per ton) Undecupium 110.00 Untridecupium 110.00
(per ton) Unquadrupium 110.

Late sell-off for equities

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1998 High Low Company 1997 High Low Company 1996 High Low Company 1995 High Low Company 1994 High Low Company 1993 High Low Company 1992 High Low Company 1991 High Low Company 1990 High Low Company 1989 High Low Company 1988 High Low Company 1987 High Low Company 1986 High Low Company 1985 High Low Company 1984 High Low Company 1983 High Low Company 1982 High Low Company 1981 High Low Company 1980 High Low Company 1979 High Low Company 1978 High Low Company 1977 High Low Company 1976 High Low Company 1975 High Low Company 1974 High Low Company 1973 High Low Company 1972 High Low Company 1971 High Low Company 1970 High Low Company 1969 High Low Company 1968 High Low Company 1967 High Low Company 1966 High Low Company 1965 High Low Company 1964 High Low Company 1963 High Low Company 1962 High Low Company 1961 High Low Company 1960 High Low Company 1959 High Low Company 1958 High Low Company 1957 High Low Company 1956 High Low Company 1955 High Low Company 1954 High Low Company 1953 High 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Edward Fennell presents a two-page special report on the Government's annual celebration of the best training in industry

Winners reap the reward of a top workforce

A recent victim of a botched programme complained earlier this month: "Training means spending three hours in a training room, falling asleep while being lectured at by someone about computers. Frankly, I'm very sceptical about the value of that."

And quite right, too. Training without targets or benefits is useless. The Government's annual National Training Awards, launched this week, aims to be an antidote to this kind of wasteful training.

With the backing of key organisations such as the CBI, the TUC and the Institute of Personnel and Development—all of whom are represented on the judging panel—National Training Awards give formal recognition each autumn to a hundred or so organisations and a score of individuals who have engaged in "exceptionally effective training".

The award winners provide models of good practice of what can be achieved when training is well managed as a business development. This can often lead to less money being spent on training—but being spent more thoughtfully and effectively.

Training is no longer the Cinderella it once was. The massive increase in the use of information technology and the current culture of customer service and quality systems has compelled employers to invest in the skills of their workforce. It was noticeable that during the last recession (for the first time) training was not slashed by the accountants as an unnecessary item in the balance sheet.

Even so, there are strong signs that while the spirit is willing, the delivery is often weak. Employers recognise the importance of training to their organisations but are

still prone to lazy planning and poor preparation. Facile short cuts—notably the off-the-shelf, generic course—still provide many employers with the bulk of their training diet. The result is bland or irrelevant courses, inadequate monitoring of achievement and little, if any, follow-up. Sure, the staff have undergone training. But what have they learnt? Has their performance materially improved? All too often nobody knows, or cares.

So, despite being in their second decade, National Training Awards still have an important mission to accomplish. In their early years the awards helped to put training on the business agenda and many of Britain's best-known companies such as Rolls-Royce, British Steel and Lucas Industries have regularly appeared among the ranks of the winners. Now more than ever, their message is that training must be delivered in a planned and professional way to realise specific benefits, whether for organisations or for individuals.

One of the main ways of communicating this message is through the nationwide series of workshops and presentations organised by training and enterprise councils (Tecs) and local enterprise councils in Scotland. These workshops have become useful training exercises in their own right as they convey the underlying principles of effective training.

Cliff Ellison, the chief executive of Rochdale Tec, is a great fan of the awards. He chairs a panel that brings together 14 organisations in the North West to promote the National Training Awards and to groom entrants for success.

"Many companies are interested in the awards, attend one of our workshops and then recognise that their own

training strategies won't make the grade," he says. "This gives us an opportunity to work with these organisations, to improve their training management and then, in due course, perhaps apply for an award."

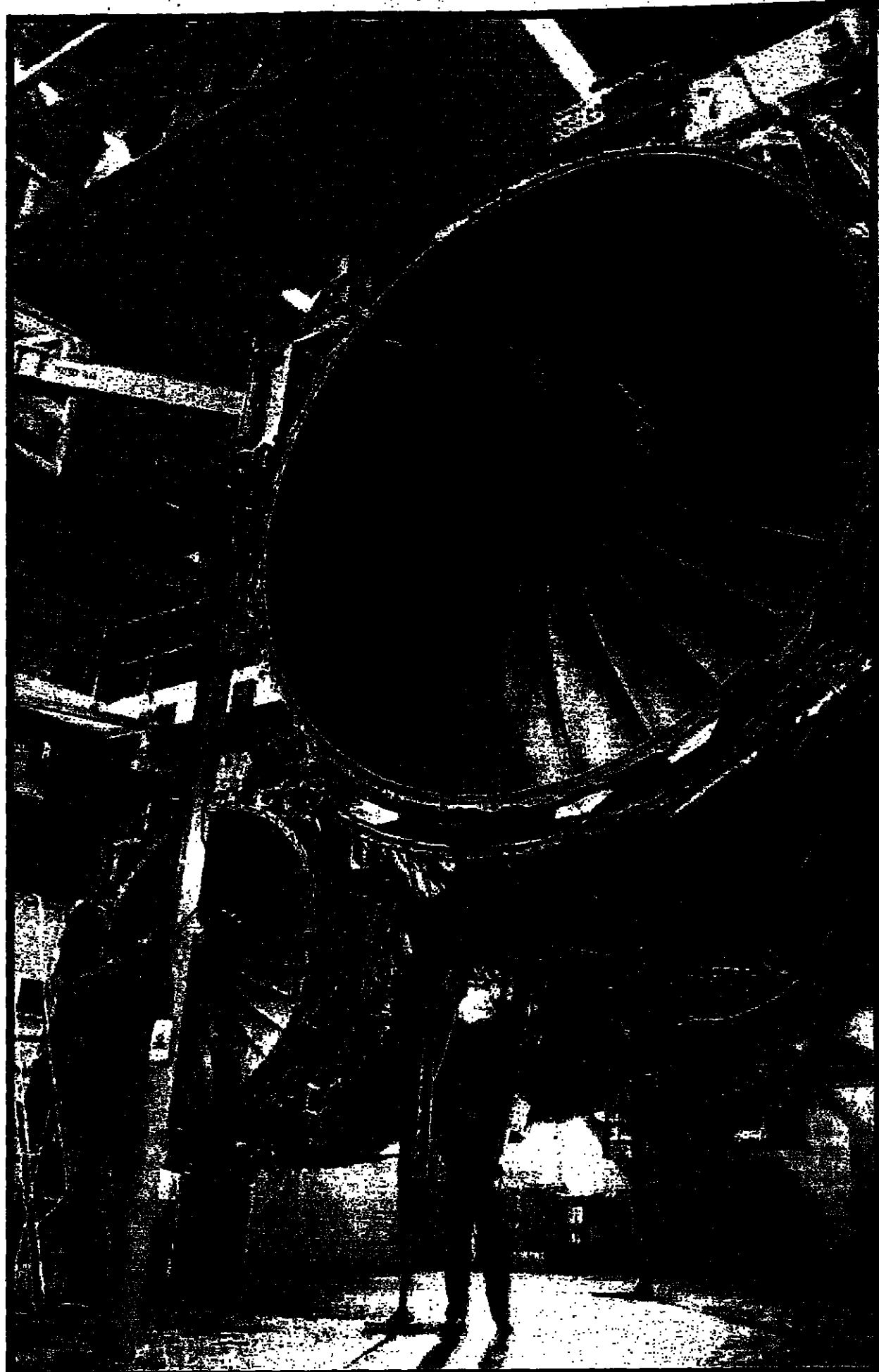
Judges not only evaluate the training but also scrutinise the results in terms of business and individual performance. This may mean that it takes a year or two before concrete results come through.

Individuals are not left out of the Training Awards agenda. With a focus on those who have used training to restart their careers or overcome disabilities, the winners' stories send out the message that responsibility for training and personal development lies with individuals just as much as with their employers.

In a world of uncertain futures where nobody is owed a job for life, individual workers must be more proactive in increasing their skills and knowledge. Individual National Training Award winners tend to be exemplars of those who have "pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps" but the general message applies to us all.

But beware of the quagmire of pointless, useless training. National Training Award Winners provide a beacon of how it should be done.

● National Training Award Workshops are being held across the North West from January through to March. For more information contact the NTA North West hotline on 01606 734355. For more information about the Awards generally contact the National Training Awards Office on 01142 593419. Entries for the 1999 awards should be received by May 14.



Rolls-Royce is among many of Britain's better known companies to appear regularly among the ranks of winners

Slump spurred lawyer to act

NINE years ago, Brian Marson's law firm was facing ruin. He had set up Marsons in Kent in 1986 and had quickly become dependent on conveyancing—but when recession destroyed the property market, Mr Marson was deeply in debt.

"Standing still was not an option," he says. "We either went up or we went out of business. I was determined to survive."

That kind of desperation drove him to invest in training. "Though I was an experienced solicitor, I knew nothing about management," he recalls. "A one-week course taught me how to write a business plan. Since then, it has been a story of continuous progress."

Now Marsons is thriving. Over the past three years, financial turnover has increased sixfold and staff by four times. Mr Marson attributes his success equally to his investment in training and information technology.

Along the way, Brian Marson has sought external recognition of the firm's achievements. First, he achieved the quality standard ISO9000. Next, he became an Investor in People, and in 1996 he won a National Training Award.

He says: "Every time we go for an award, we learn something about ourselves. And we use the information to improve the firm."

This year Marsons will be entering again for an award. Mr Marson believes that the contribution made by training to the progress of the business warrants it. The link between IT and training is now particularly important.

With the right technology and skilled people, Marsons has automated many legal processes and the firm has now picked up slices of work from banks and housing associations of a magnitude that would have been beyond him in the early 1980s.

He adds: "There are some high-tech firms that are trying to continue using typewriters—I don't see how they can survive. To succeed today, you have got to be prepared to make the investment in your staff and in technology."



High performance business and management training has helped Scania to realise its ambitions

Pole position in the trucks race

Graham Cramp of Scania (Great Britain) is not much given to sentiment or trippery. He has looked at a number of external awards and badges and dismissed them as irrelevant.

But he is a great fan of National Training Awards. As Scania's franchise and staff development manager, he must persuade franchisees to attend courses that help to build their business.

"These franchisees are a sceptical lot—but they do respond to genuine quality."

That's why Mr Cramp was keen to gain a National Training Award as an endorsement of what he is providing.

"Our franchisees must pay to attend our courses so they need to be confident that they will get value for money. Having a National Training Award helps to demonstrate that," he says.

Scania has won National Training Awards twice in the past four years and its approach is firmly grounded in the business needs of the organisation. "Some years ago we were given the task of increas-

Scania tailored its staff development scheme to win a second award

ing our penetration of the trucks market from 9 per cent to 20 per cent," Mr Cramp says.

"To do that we had to increase the number of our workshops and provide excellent aftercare service. That meant training a lot of people in technical skills. But we also decided, for the first time, to offer training in business and management skills."

It is the business and management training that has helped Scania to realise its ambitions in Britain, and Mr Cramp was delighted when the programme received the ultimate stamp of approval from the National Training Awards judges.

"It was good for me and my staff. It was also good for the people coming on the course—

it gave them confidence in what they would experience. And, finally, it was good for our customers because they could feel reassured about the quality of service they would receive."

Like many National Training Award winners Mr Cramp is critical of much of the training that is available on the market.

"I don't believe in quick fixes," he says. "For training to be effective it needs to be undertaken over a period of time and should ideally include a measurement of what people can do before the start of the course so that progress can be measured. You also need to evaluate its long-term impact."

Scania's business strategy based on training has paid off. The company reached pole position in the trucks business three years ahead of schedule. And it is still committed to the value of National Training Awards.

"The next time we have a training programme that is exceptionally effective then we shall definitely enter it," says Mr Cramp.

Investing in drivers as well as diggers makes sense at Shepherd Construction

Smart builders pass the site test

THE construction industry is bedeviled by cowboy builders, but Shepherd Construction has no such reputation—quite the reverse. Based in Yorkshire but operating nationally, Shepherd has a string of eminent clients (including, for example, Marks & Spencer) who return to the company on a regular basis.

One of Shepherd's greatest strengths is that it has a permanently employed workforce of more than 1,000. It also has a commitment to training and retaining its staff on a long-term basis.

John Foreman, the personnel director, points out that the family-owned company has a training record stretching right back to the early Sixties, when its founder, Sir Peter Shepherd, established its corporate values. That training tradition continues today under the present chairman, Paul Shepherd.

Shepherd Construction is engaged on a wide spectrum of training, ranging from Modern Apprenticeships to advanced technical and management training linked to post-graduate qualifications.

"Training is focused on our operating needs," Mr Foreman says. "It is driven by hard business objectives and we are always concerned that any training programme we are involved in, at whatever level, should produce results on the bottom line."

This practical attitude has won

Shepherd two National Training Awards in recent years. "We see National Training Awards as a way of measuring ourselves against the best in the country," Mr Foreman says.

"When we win an award it is good for our pride, and also a way of showing our customers that we are concerned about the skill levels of our staff. Discriminating clients recognise the importance of that."

Mr Foreman is a keen supporter of the work done nationally by the Construction Industry Training Board to

ensure that the industry's skill needs are met. But he is worried that training is not taken seriously enough in some companies.

"Many managers take far more time and care in selecting a new JCB than in ensuring that a driver is properly trained to operate it," he says. "Yet without the right training, the equipment will not repay the investment. It is important that employers should get the right balance in their priorities and appreciate how important training is—provided it is done properly."

Mr Foreman also feels that it is too easy for managers to select off-the-shelf courses without questioning whether they will be genuinely relevant in the workplace.

"National Training Awards really test the effectiveness of training," Mr Foreman says. "That is why we think they are worthwhile."



Training award winner: a Bombardier maintenance team

Skilled personnel take off in Ulster

A global aerospace manufacturer has stayed ahead by constantly upgrading staff training

Despite the Troubles, Northern Ireland has had at least one long-running success story, with the aircraft-maker Shorts, now part of Bombardier Aerospace, the Canadian-based multinational.

During the past decade the company has won eight National Training Awards, an extraordinary achievement. The success rate, however, reflects the company's commitment to training. As the world's third largest civil aircraft manufacturer (making, for example, the Learjet, the Challenger and the Global Express), Bombardier has introduced a new aircraft every year for the past six years.

This level of innovation demands that the company cannot stand still. It needs to develop its skill base constantly, both technically and managerially.

David Molloy is the French-Canadian acting vice-president for human resources for Shorts in Belfast. "The skills of the Northern Ireland workforce are well-respected throughout the company," he says. "Laurent Beaudoin, the president of Bombardier, was commenting on them in Canada recently. And the company has a strong commitment to continue developing those skills. During the past ten years we have spent £70 million on training alone in Belfast."

But where do National Training Awards fit in? "I think that external evaluation and recogni-

tion of what one is doing is very important. It is satisfying to receive a government award of this kind," says Mr Molloy.

Although Bombardier has a strong respect for the cultural and social differences within its organisation (it operates in 11 countries across North America and Europe), it uses a common, company-wide performance management system in which skills, career development and succession planning are closely interwoven.

Based on regular personal appraisals, the planning of training is linked directly to the overall needs of the business and the career progress of each individual.

Everything, ultimately, is geared to financial results. The various National Training Award winning entries have all stemmed from this process.

Its entry for last year was typical of its approach. Featuring a training programme for employees who worked on aerospace machinery maintenance, Shorts was able to show that dependence on suppliers had been sharply reduced. This led to savings of about £3 million and a 20 per cent improvement in engineering maintenance productivity.

With results like that it is not surprising that Bombardier has no hesitation in continuing to back its training commitment in Northern Ireland—and to support the National Training Awards.

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More initiatives bubble in the forge

The minister in charge of boosting Britain's skills base has high hopes, says Edward Fennell

As the recently appointed Minister for Lifelong Learning, George Mudie has a down-to-earth approach to the job of steering the UK's investment in job training.

Representing a Leeds constituency that has seen a massive reduction of the local clothing industry, he knows how important it is for people to develop new skills and for communities to plan ahead to attract fresh investment and jobs.

With the task of spearheading initiatives such as the University for Industry and the new Individual Learning Accounts, Mr Mudie is confident that 1999 will be the year that training for jobs starts to attract its share of the limelight at the Department for Education and Employment.

As its annual recognition of excellence in training takes place, the National Training Awards continue to play an important part in the department's initiatives to encourage greater take-up of effective training.

Mr Mudie's particular concern is that employers should adopt a liberal approach, so that programmes are not too narrowly focused but, rather, help to develop employees' capabilities.

As its annual recognition of excellence in training the NTA continues to play an important part in the DfEE's suite of initiatives to encourage the greater take-up of effective training. In recent years, however, the number of applications for NTAs has dropped.

For example, since 1996 there has been a fall of 33 per cent. Official views are mixed on this.

The numbers of entrants may have declined, but the quality is higher and the workshops run by Tecs has led to much greater self-selection among potential applicants.

A big test for the department will be the take-up this year of Individual Learning Accounts. The Government will be making £150 a head available to 100,000 people from April. In return, those people must make a personal investment of



Mudie concerned

£25. The aim is to have a million people with learning accounts by 2002.

If the system is to work, it is vital that the money is wisely spent. Mr Mudie is keen to maximise the benefits by encouraging workers to act collectively — through their trade unions, typically — so as to gain economies of scale in buying in relevant training.

He is convinced that the na-

Labour's election campaign and the time has come to start delivering. A budget of £40 million has been allocated for the university, and an advisory board has been put in place a three-year development plan.

Based in Sheffield, the university will aim to exploit the potential of information technology in general, and the Internet in particular, to produce a wide range of learning materials that people can easily gain access to at work or at home.

Money has been won from the European Union's Adapt scheme to fund the development projects, and the university should start to make its presence felt during the next two years.

Yet while pushing forward on these new fronts, Mr Mudie is still concerned to embed some developments from the previous administration. The increased take-up of National Vocational Qualifications, the new-style job qualifications launched a decade ago, is of continuing concern to him.

'She was so proud of her certificate that she put it up above where she worked'

tional mood is right for this kind of initiative. "The empowerment of individuals through training" is his personal motto in driving forward the programme. Aware that the UK still has one of the highest proportions of unqualified people among the Western industrialised nations, he believes that this "second chance" education is now critical for the future of both individuals and industry.

Parallel to Individual Learning Accounts is the opening of the University for Industry. Much was made of this during

Sceptical at first of the value of NVQs, he is now a supporter. "I was visiting a factory in Leeds and I met a young woman who had recently gained an NVQ. She was so proud of her achievement that she had framed the certificate and put it up above where she worked. It clearly meant a lot to her."

To achieve his ambitions for all these initiatives, Mr Mudie is keen to work with both the locally based Tecs and Less and the recently established National Training Organisations.

"These are people who must work directly with employers to ensure that training continues to be a high priority," he says.

The significance of National Training Awards is that they provide real-life examples of what training can achieve. "I am fully behind NTAs," Mr Mudie says. "We must work to ensure that participation continues to grow."



An excellent training schedule, such as here at the Scunthorpe works, has enabled British Steel to be a regular winner of a National Training Award

Fighting spirit the perfect weapon

An ex-soldier is promoted from manual labour to management



Mercer: combined rubbish with finance

During the four years he was in the Army, Steve Mercer acquired the skills and personal attributes of the professional soldier. When he got back to civvy street (straight from a tour of duty in Northern Ireland) he found the personal attributes stood him in good stead, even if he could not transfer the military skills. "At first I was unemployed," he explains. "It was frustrating. I felt I had the potential to develop a good career, but it was a question of finding the right opportunity."

Mr Mercer's story has been one of rags-to-acclaim (if not riches) as a National Training Awards individual winner. He got his first permanent civilian job ten years ago, collecting Christmas rubbish as part of the Rochdale Bor-

ough Council's direct services organisation.

"When I was interviewed for the job I told the manager that I wanted first to learn to drive the truck, then to be in charge of it and then to be promoted to management," he says. "He was amazed at my attitude, and then gave me a lot of support later on."

Through plenty of hard work, training and learning in his own time — plus the support of a sympathetic employer — Mr Mercer achieved his ambitions, and more. "After working all day I used to go to college to study finance, where I was alongside people who had been sitting comfort-

ably in their offices with their Filofaxes while I was out collecting rubbish," he recalls.

Mr Mercer's resilience, a legacy from the Forces, paid off. He gained a supervisor's qualification, a Higher National Certificate in Business and Finance and various other qualifications, including a Diploma in Occupational Safety.

Meanwhile, he was being promoted at work and is now the manager responsible for health, safety and quality assurance of 1,800 staff.

His career advancement and learning success earned him a Supreme Winners Award in the National Train-

ing Awards in 1997 and the chance to meet government ministers and officials at the House of Commons.

"I firmly believe in the importance of creating opportunities for people to develop themselves," he says. "Employers should never underestimate the capabilities of their staff."

Mr Mercer's participation in the National Training Awards allowed him the opportunity to gain recognition for his achievements while highlighting just how much individuals can progress if presented with basic opportunities for self-development. And it's certainly not the end for him — he's keen to take his career to an even higher level. "I am not resting on my laurels," he says. "I want further opportunities."

Have an expert
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D/EE

If you're training or taking part in a training programme, you'll need to know exactly how you're performing.

It's easy enough to find out. Just fill in a National Training Award entry form. You'll find that the answer you get will tell you just how well your training is working for your company.

What's more, you could win a National Training Award. And you already know how important it is to know how you're performing. So, fill in your form today. Call 0800 917 7157.



THE TIMES

Family Division

Reforming adoption procedure

In re R (a Minor) (inter-country adoptions: Practice)
Before Mrs Justice Bracewell
[Judgment January 13]

Alterations to current practice and procedures were clearly needed in order to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in inter-country adoptions and to prevent a repetition of the grave injustice to a child that had arisen in the instant case.

Mrs Justice Bracewell, sitting in the Family Division, so stated when dismissing the applicants' adoption application and making the child a ward of court while granting care and control to the applicants, making an order for contact with the natural family and ordering the applicants to allocate £30,000 to finance that future contact and to pay £20,000 in costs to the Official Solicitor.

Since making those orders she had heard argument on practice and procedure and was giving judgment in open court in order to provide guidelines for future management in respect of foreign country adoptions.

Although the judgment was delivered in open court, the case was heard in chambers and leave to report was given on the basis that the anonymity of the child, the parties and the location of the case would be preserved.

Miss Amanda Barrington-Smith for the applicants; Mr Peter Jackson for the parents; Mr Peter Horrocks for the local authority; Miss Lisa Giovanni for the Secretary of State for the Home Department; Mr Michael Stern for the guardian ad litem.

MRS JUSTICE BRACEWELL said that the child, AM, aged five, had come to the United Kingdom accompanied by one of the applicants, Mrs R.

The immigration officer, on being shown a single visit entry clearance issued in Bucharest for the limited purpose of a one-month holiday visit with parental consent, issued the standard six-month entry visa.

Although at that time Mrs R had denied any intent to adopt, the applicants subsequently gave notice under section 22 of the Adoption Act 1976 to the local authority that they intended to adopt AM and in 1995 issued an application to adopt which stated that the natural parents consented.

Under section 32 of the 1976 Act, AM became a protected child. The Home Office allowed her to stay on for 12 months, extended twice. Meanwhile, the natural parents had eventually been contacted in August 1996 when they expressed their opposition to the adoption and demanded AM's return.

The Official Solicitor had been appointed in October 1995 when the case was transferred to the High Court. He first met the parents in 1998. By that time the Home Secretary had intervened to oppose the adoption application.

Having listed the current legitimate procedures, her Ladyship said that she had two principal concerns.

The first was the question of delay; the child, aged five, had arrived in this country from Romania on August 15, 1994 and her future was not determined until December 2, 1998, over four years later. The problem to be addressed was the need to prevent passage of time determining placement.

The second concern was the suppression of truth: the statutory scheme for the protection of children in inter-country adoptions did not result in the true facts being revealed until the hearing was concluded in progress. The problem to be addressed was the effective use of procedure and guidelines to deter British citizens from embarking on illegal adoption activities.

Compliance with proper procedures minimised the risk of injustice, providing a firm foundation for a child's future and a clear history of the past; disregard of the procedures deprived children of protection, exposed them to criminal offences under sections 11 and 57 of the 1976 Act, might well involve immigration control offences, were generally accompanied by lies and dishonesty and led to complex and costly proceedings with potential abuses including unsuitable carers, disregard for parental rights, trafficking in children and intolerable delay.

Applicants

The crucial matter of principle was the duty of full and frank disclosure. As Sir Stephen Brown, President of the Family Division, had said in the Court of Appeal in *Oxfordshire County Council v M* (1994) Fam 151, 161:

"That applicant's cases are to be regarded as being in a special category... Relevant information should be made available to the court in order that it can arrive at a conclusion which is in the overriding interests of the welfare of the child."

That applied with special force to applicants in inter-country adoptions as they were usually the only parties with full knowledge of all the facts.

The Home Office

On permitting entry to non-European Union citizens the standard practice was to grant permission for a six-month stay; thereafter no checks of any kind were made to see whether the individual had left the jurisdiction.

That was a serious failure of responsibility which enabled people to disappear from view and could only operate to encourage law-breaking.

Where a child of non-European Union origin arrived accompanied by a non-related adult, the child should be permitted entry only with written parental consent, for the minimum period necessary not the conventional six months.

Within 72 hours the Home Office should inform the Department of Health and the local authority's social services should be informed within 72 hours thereafter so that the child could be treated as a privately fostered child within the terms of section 67 of the Children Act 1989.

If the Home Office was notified that the parents did not consent to the child's presence here the child should be deported immediately.

Department of Health

The Department of Health should take on the role of coordinating policy and actively inquire into steps being taken by the local authority.

The department knew of AM's presence in November 1994 but took no action, nor had it responded to the Official Solicitor's letter in August 1996.

The local authority

Once the local authority had learned of AM's presence in 1994 it had a duty to satisfy itself that her welfare was being safeguarded. In the event the local authority failed to discharge its duties to AM, either as a privately fostered child or as a child in need under section 17 of the 1989 Act.

In respect of notification of a child in AM's position the local authority should have a pivotal role. It should consider the matter at director level and seek legal advice, attempting to contact the natural parents immediately to seek clarification of the child's status.

If not satisfied, it should consider proceedings under Part IV and V of the 1989 Act and, if an adoption application was issued, the local authority should ascertain if that intention had been disclosed to the immigration officer.

If not, it should apply for the case to be transferred to the High Court and listed as a matter of urgency for directions and investigation.

The court

Under section 6 of the 1976 Act the court had a duty to consider all the circumstances, primarily the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.

In this case the court took no decision of any significance for three years, no guardian ad litem was appointed for nine months, the natural parents were not made parties.

As a stark illustration of progress, up until February 1998 the court had eight documents by Solicitors: Pro Bono Unit; Mishcon de Roy; Solicitor for the local authority; Treasury Solicitor; Official Solicitor.

Guardian ad litem

The guardian ad litem had a duty to investigate, particularly the corporation tax otherwise payable on that foreign income equal to and offset by double taxation relief, thereby leaving to its modest chargeable gains constituting the remainder of its total profits the amount of the charges on interest.

The primary issue on the appeal was whether it had been entitled to compute its profits in that way, which produced an excess of charges on income capable of being carried forward to a subsequent accounting period.

The issue on construction and interpretation of sections 38(1), 39(3) and 79(7) of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988.

In conclusion, her Ladyship directed that a copy of the transcript of the judgment be provided to the Department of Health, the Home Office and the Lord Chancellor's Department to try to prevent any repetition of the grave injustice that had been done to the child in this case.

Solicitors: Pro Bono Unit; Mishcon de Roy; Solicitor for the local authority; Treasury Solicitor; Official Solicitor.

Regina v Hillingdon London Borough Council, Ex parte London Regional Transport

Before Mr Justice Hilden
[Judgment December 18]

The giving of consent by a local authority to erect and maintain bus shelters on highway land within the council's area, under section 104 of the London Transport Passenger Act 1934, was a continuous consent subject to withdrawal by the local authority, and not an irrevocable one and for all consent.

Where the council revoked the consent it had acted lawfully.

Mr Justice Hilden so held in the Queen's Bench Division when dismissing an application for judicial review of the decision of the community and environment committee of Hillingdon London Borough Council on February 11, 1998, given effect by notice dated April 24, 1998.

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On receipt of an adoption application the court should draw up a precise time-table and applicants should be required to file an affidavit in advance setting out all the circumstances, including parental consent.

All parties should be required to attend, the Home Office should send a knowledgeable representative to the hearings, cross-examination should be permitted, the court should never accept uncorroborated documents, and directions should include personal service on the natural parents.

If it appeared that the parents had never consented in writing to an adoption then the court should transfer the case to the High Court, consider summary dismissal, invite the Official Solicitor to make the child a ward of court and order the local authority to seek the natural parents. Should the case continue the court should keep a close eye on all matters.

This case demonstrated, in particular, that rule 21 of the Adoption Rules (SI 1984 No 265) did not not import sufficient urgency in listing non-agency inter-country adoptions and further consideration might be appropriate in respect of Practice Direction (inter-country adoptions: Transfer of proceedings) (1994) 1 WLR 13 regarding transfers between the county court and the High Court.

Guardian ad litem

The guardian ad litem had a duty to investigate, particularly the corporation tax otherwise payable on that foreign income equal to and offset by double taxation relief, thereby leaving to its modest chargeable gains constituting the remainder of its total profits the amount of the charges on interest.

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Law Report January 20 1999

Allocating foreign income for tax

Commercial Union Assurance Co plc v Shaw (Inspector of Taxes)
Before Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Peter Gibson and Lord Justice Brooke
[Judgment December 21]

A company was not entitled to allocate to its foreign income only so much of any charges on income as would leave the corporation tax otherwise payable on that foreign income equal to and offset by double taxation relief, thereby producing an excess of charges on income capable of being carried forward to a subsequent accounting period.

The taxpayer had submitted, first, that double taxation relief came within the words "other relief from tax" in section 38(1) so that the total profits had to be treated as reduced by double taxation relief.

Second, it had relied on the fact that it was entitled to use its power of allocation under section 79(7) to allocate charges on income in such amounts and to such of its profits as it chose.

It had submitted that the effect of that was that it could take full advantage of double taxation relief, which would otherwise expire, and also of the relief for charges on income which, if not fully utilised in the current period, survived for use in subsequent periods.

The taxpayer's first submission turned on the meaning of the words of section 38(1) allowing relief on income by deducting against the total profits for the period as reduced by any other relief from tax, other than group relief.

In his Lordship's judgment, section 38(1) did not assist the taxpayer because double taxation relief was not a relief from tax which reduced profits, but was a credit to be allowed against UK tax, in the present case corporation tax see section 79(1).

The scheme of the corporation tax legislation required, first, the ascertainment of income from a particular source and chargeable gains, as reduced by any relief applicable to income from that source to the extent of the charges on income and received foreign income subject to foreign tax qualifying for double taxation relief.

It had purported to allocate to its foreign income only so much of the charges on income as would leave the corporation tax otherwise payable on that foreign income equal to and offset by double taxation relief, thereby leaving to its modest chargeable gains constituting the remainder of its total profits the amount of the charges on interest.

The primary issue on the appeal was whether it had been entitled to compute its profits in that way, which produced an excess of charges on income capable of being carried forward to a subsequent accounting period.

The issue on construction and interpretation of sections 38(1), 39(3) and 79(7) of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988.

In conclusion, her Ladyship directed that a copy of the transcript of the judgment be provided to the Department of Health, the Home Office and the Lord Chancellor's Department to try to prevent any repetition of the grave injustice that had been done to the child in this case.

Solicitors: Pro Bono Unit; Mishcon de Roy; Solicitor for the local authority; Treasury Solicitor; Official Solicitor.

Regina v Hillingdon London Borough Council, Ex parte London Regional Transport

Before Mr Justice Hilden
[Judgment December 18]

The giving of consent by a local authority to erect and maintain bus shelters on highway land within the council's area, under section 104 of the London Transport Passenger Act 1934, was a continuous consent subject to withdrawal by the local authority, and not an irrevocable one and for all consent.

Where the council revoked the consent it had acted lawfully.

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On receipt of an adoption application the court should draw up a precise time-table and applicants should be required to file an affidavit in advance setting out all the circumstances, including parental consent.

All parties should be required to attend, the Home Office should send a knowledgeable representative to the hearings, cross-examination should be permitted, the court should never accept uncorroborated documents, and directions should include personal service on the natural parents.

If it appeared that the parents had never consented in writing to an adoption then the court should transfer the case to the High Court, consider summary dismissal, invite the Official Solicitor to make the child a ward of court and order the local authority to seek the natural parents. Should the case continue the court should keep a close eye on all matters.

This case demonstrated, in particular, that rule 21 of the Adoption Rules (SI 1984 No 265) did not not import sufficient urgency in listing non-agency inter-country adoptions and further consideration might be appropriate in respect of Practice Direction (inter-country adoptions: Transfer of proceedings) (1994) 1 WLR 13 regarding transfers



POP

THE TIMES ARTS

THEATRE

Hits and misses at the Mime Festival
PAGE 35

All was fair in a love like a war

CINEMA: Portraying Jacqueline du Pré's life was painful for director
Anand Tucker, Carol Allen reports

Anand Tucker, the director of *Hilary and Jackie*, has a background in documentaries. And although he and the writer Frank Cottrell Boyce painstakingly researched their feature film about the relationship between Hilary du Pré and her famous cellist sister, Jacqueline, who was struck down by multiple sclerosis at the height of her career, as thoroughly as any factual documentary, Tucker makes what might seem a startling admission.

"There's no such thing as the truth," he says. "It doesn't exist. What there is this side of the story and that side and probably 20 more sides. Films are very simple things. Lives are very complicated. Our film is a mythic story about two extraordinary women. Everyone else, they're like satellites revolving around these two powerful forces."

The film and the book, *A Genius in the Family*, Hilary and Piers du Pré's memoir of life with their sister from which the film draws much of its material, actually grew side by side as separate entities. Tucker saw a four-page treatment of the book before it had been written and from that decided this was a story he wanted to film.

"I'd had no idea of the depth of suffering that Jackie had been through," he says. "Nor of the incredible power of this relationship that she had had with her sister and the extraordinary sacrifice that Hilary made for Jackie out of love—huge, epic, unbelievable things that moved me to my very heart. I felt I just had to make the film."

The sacrifice referred to is the revelation, which caused such a stir when the du Pré's book was published in 1997, of Jackie's apparently bizarre demand at one point in their lives, with which her sister concurred, for sexual relations with Hilary's husband. For

Tucker that apparently monstrous situation was the core of the story. "What the story's about is unconditional love. Is that possible and how far can you push that? There's one person in the world who loves you no matter what. In this case your sister. You lose her and then you find her again, that's the story that made me cry."

Having read the treatment, Tucker and Cottrell Boyce met the du Prés, heard their experiences first-hand and then spent the next year researching their material, interviewing family, friends, colleagues and tutors who had known Hilary and Jackie, looking for the way to transfer their vision to the screen.

"What I've always done with anyone I've ever made a film about," says Tucker, "is to say: 'You've seen my work. I've told you the film I want to make: you have to decide whether you can trust me or not. The film I will make is not your story. It will be my version. If you want a truthful and accurate representation of your life, go away and do it yourself. Don't let me make your film.' They looked me in the eyes, they trusted me, in the same way that I had to decide whether I trusted them or not. That's all you can ever do."

One person who refused to be interviewed or take part in any way was Jackie's husband, Daniel Barenboim. He

is, however, by no means unsympathetically treated in the film. "He declined to participate," says Tucker. "That's his prerogative and I respect him for that. If the film had been Jackie and Danny I'd never have made it, but the film we were making was about two sisters who love each other no matter what and go through this extraordinary life together. I think he's a hero and I hope I would have done as much for her in the same situation as he did. If he ever does see the film I hope he feels that we have done right by him too."

The film more or less divides into three acts: childhood and adolescence, and then the events of adult life, seen firstly from Hilary's point of view and then from Jackie's.

In the Hilary section of the story, Jackie often appears monstrous, not just with regard to the incident involving the husband, but in terms of her dominance of the family and apparently unreasonable and childish behaviour. Although much of this becomes explicable and even sympathetic in the third part, as we see her loneliness and insecurity as a young woman and then the terrifying onset of her illness, it is inevitably based on surmise and imagination. Jacqueline du Pré is not here to speak for herself.

"But what we have is the music," Tucker points out. "I don't mean to be pretentious

about this but actually the music speaks to you. You cannot be truthful to that—the fear, despair, pain, anguish, love, sorrow, all that is in her musical voice, that's why the music lives."

Some of the most painful scenes in the film are inevitably those involving the destruction of Jackie's talent and existence by her illness. To gain insight into this Tucker and Emily Watson, who plays Jackie, spent time with other MS sufferers. "The one thing that characterises all of them is anger," says Tucker.

"Some people have got upset because she's shown as being difficult in the film, because Jacqueline du Pré has always been an icon. In a way it's been almost too painful for people to contemplate the reality of this beautiful, golden girl being struck down by this disease. But the truth of it was, she raged against the dying of the light, rather than sitting meekly in a corner, wasting away and being saintly. She was furious and desperate and she was pretty awful but that's because she was so angry and I think that needs honouring."

While *Hilary and Jackie* is his first feature film, the 35-year-old Tucker admits that his previous work has always had that element of personal vision. "Anyone who makes a film about it, as if you have an image in a mirror of that person and you smash it into pieces. Then you talk to all these different people, they each give you a little shard of who this person is and you try to stick it together. But you can only interpret it your way."

"Anyone else would have made a different film and I'm not going to pretend I've hit upon the absolute truth. But for me it's been the most amazing journey in my life."

● Hilary and Jackie opens on Friday



Anand Tucker: "I always say, if you want a truthful and accurate representation of your life, go away and do it yourself"

MUSIC: Richard Morrison previews a disturbing TV documentary about instrumentalists

Orchestra pours out tale of woe

Y ou surely must be road, brave or colossally vain to allow a fly-on-the-wall television crew into your workplace. Especially if your workplace is the arts, a field rich in pretension and pomposity, just made for the deadpan mockery of the roving camera.

Think how comprehensively the Royal Opera House management was shafted by *The House*. Or how a bunch of newspaper critics, several of them quite bright and well-adjusted chaps, naively allowed themselves to be stitched up on Channel 4 last year.

Message received and understood? Clearly not. Starting this Sunday on Channel 4, *The Phil* goes behind the scenes of the Philharmonia as it struggles to stay afloat in London's murky orchestral pond. True, this is no *House*-style hunchback job. There are no slippery PRs or odious mega-egos unwittingly digging themselves into large holes here. What we see is something much sadder: a mostly sympathetic portrayal of gifted people who have become disenchanted and debilitated by the grinding process of being a classical musician in a seemingly hostile world.



Philharmonia players may do 600 sessions a year to survive

That the Philharmonia is not some mediocre pick-up band, but one of our finest orchestras—resident in Paris and London, and as pristine in squeaky-door Uggles as in bread-and-butter Brahms—only makes this portrait gloomier. In the British orchestral world, being *la crème de la crème* is apparently no guarantee of security or serenity.

The *Phil* presents several familiar cameos: the reformed alcoholic string player contemplating a thrombosis that may end his career 25 years early; the woman player struggling to reconcile being a mother to young children with the relentless touring; the first clarinet being told that there is no way the orchestra can afford to hire a "co-principal" to ease his stress level. No wonder that several players tell the camera that they would never allow their own children to follow

them into the music business. But most of all *The Phil* portrays the bloody-minded determination of London orchestral players to survive, come hell or high water. If this means playing a brain-numbing 600 sessions a year, keeping up an interminable zigzag of one-night stands across Europe, self-imposing a pay freeze or cut (all the London orchestras are co-operatives) and accepting frayed health, frayed nerves and a shredded family life with a stoical shrug, then that is what they will do. This is why, in spite of all efforts by tidy-minded bureaucrats to "rationalise" London's orchestral life, the capital still has more orchestras than any other city in the world.

In a way this grit is admirable. But as Graham Johnson's series unfolds, the question "what's the point of it all?" does start to nag. If these players ever derived joy from their art, they keep damn quiet about it now. "We're artists rather than artists—more like bricklayers," says the Philharmonia's dour chairman Keith Bragg, by way of explanation. But that isn't really the reason. I have often been privi-

leged to observe the Philharmonia and other London orchestras on tour. I know these players still love music. They wouldn't play with such passion otherwise; nor would they stand the hours. They can also be wickedly funny; that's what keeps them sane.

Why, then, did they agree to make these programmes and then suppress their joy and wit? Perhaps because they are desperate. Right at the end of the last programme, the Philharmonia's managing director, David Whelton, announces quite calmly that he doesn't believe that orchestras like the Philharmonia will exist in Britain 15 years from now. To judge by their mood in this series, few of his players would disagree with that bleak view. They seem exhausted by the battle to keep going. *The Phil* is their SOS.

● The *Phil* is broadcast on Channel 4 this Sunday at 8pm, and then on Jan 31 and Feb 7

Novelty still wild at fifty

CONCERT

Messiaen Festival
Barbican/Radio 3

was the third movement's melting dialogue with the clarinet: clear proof in Jeanne Loriod's hands that the instrument can produce more than extra-terrestrial mating calls or the sound of a vacuum cleaner being switched on.

We were also helped by hearing the piece alongside its companions in Messiaen's trilogy inspired by the Tristan legend. *Turangallila* was prefaced by the *Cinq Rechants* of 1948 (the BBC Singers soprano

es especially radiant. In the afternoon, accompanied by Iain Burnside, Susan Bullock's dramatic soprano shook St Giles' Church with *Harawi* (1945), a chain of lullabies, Inca dances and celestial visions. In all three Messiaen celebrates the love that leaps over death towards cosmic joy, and it was revealing to hear related impulses clothed in different guises. For the vocal works, Messiaen used invented words, phrases echoing the Tristan and Orpheus legends, throat clicks and shrieks: very effective in their way, though they made one grateful that *Turangallila* had no words beyond its title—a Sanskrit word fusing the concepts of time, movement, love, life and death.

The afternoon concert also featured *Quartet for the End of Time*, which he wrote in 1940 as a prisoner of war. This is big music writ little, with an impassioned cello and repeated piano chords conjuring emotions that *Turangallila* is too loud and crazy to reach. All soloists performed well, but the cellist Paul Watkins was exemplary. All told, a wonderful day.

GEOFF BROWN

Climactic in many ways

ning out sounds over a given period. Certainly, there are no songs and the only audible sin is durational—which is not in the deadly-sinful category although, if the piece had gone on a moment or two longer, it might well have qualified.

Sinfu Songs is a tale that could have been applied to the other new work in the programme. Alastair Greig's *Play*. Here is a composer with a strong lyrical instinct but one which he is apparently reluctant to indulge. *Play* is based, he says, on the interplay of two contrasting melodic lines that run through its five sections. But it is not until well into the second of them, where a solo flute occupies the attention, that Greig actually allows a line to take a fully coherent shape. The real interest of the piece, which is skilfully and attractive-

ly written for a large ensemble, is in observing the varying degrees of freedom allowed to the linear impulse before it expires in a quiet but dramatically conceived ending.

While it would have been a pity to lose either John Woolrich's wittily articulated *Lending Wings* (a BCMG commission from ten years ago) or Lindberg's refreshingly direct *Corrente*, it was unfortunate that the concert overran the standard time. Apart from the fact that less is better than more in a programme of largely unfamiliar music, there was the usual problem of members of the audience making their exits during the last item. For those who did not have to go, and who were not distracted by those who did, Komsi's performance of *Messages of the late Miss R.V. Troussow*, beautifully sung in general and impressively faded in the notated organs of the second section, was an experience that made most of the rest seem trivial in comparison.

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LISTINGS

Schoolgirls' new opera

RECOMMENDED TODAY

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Mark Hargie

LONDON

MEASURE FOR MEASURE Stephen Boyd is superb as Angelo, and Clara Holman is lovely as Isabella, in Michael Boyd's RSC production of Shakespeare's most twisted play. Barbican (0171-638 8891). Opens tonight, 7pm. In repertory. (5)

STONE ANGELS Paul Barker's new opera features a cast of 30 schoolgirls from the acclaimed New London Children's Choir and tells the story of a group of girls stranded on a Greek island at the outbreak of the Second World War. For this premiere Odette de la Martinez conducts her ensemble Lantano. Chie Baldwin directs. Riverside Theatre (0181-237 1111). Reviews tonight, 8pm. Opens tomorrow, 7.30pm. (5)

THE DECEIVED The Italian source for Shakespeare's Twelfth Night but much more of a cross-dressing comedy. Theatrical Real's production for the Theatre Royal, Windsor (01753 8622). Tonight and tomorrow, 8pm. (5)

ELSEWHERE Liverpool Stage music features prominently in this concert as the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra performs extracts from Giuseppe Verdi's *La Traviata*. The evening also offers Sarsa's seductive Carmen Fantasy for Violin, and Saint-Saëns's mighty Organ Symphony. For a full programme visit the Philharmonic Hall (0151-709 3789). Tonight, 7.30pm.

POOLE In a concert boasting a double dose of distinguished Russian musical artists Dmitri Kozlov



Boris Berezovsky plays Beethoven in Poole

conducts the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in a programme of Beethoven's symphonies, with Boris Berezovsky as soloist in Beethoven's lyrical Third Piano Concerto. Poole Arts Centre (01202 66222). Tonight, 7.30pm. (5)

YORK The vibrant young ensemble Capricorn performs an engaging programme of chamber music opening with Beethoven's Piano Quintet followed by Mozart's Quintet for piano and wind in E flat, and concluding with Brahms's Piano Quintet in G minor. Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, (01904 434338). Tonight, 8pm. (5)

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London
 ■ House full, returns only ■ Some seats available ■ Seats at all prices

RICHARD III Robert Lindsay plays the hump for Ewan Macra's RSC production, transfer from Stratford. Swanley (0171-638 8891).

THE COLOUR OF JUSTICE Dramatised reconstruction of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. Titled to coincide with the month's publication of the findings. Proudly relevant. Tivoli (0171-328 1000).

IN FLAME The tangled worlds of a modern woman and an Edwardian man (Valerie Cogan, Emma Lowery) collide in Charlotte Jones's new play, directed by Anna Macken. Bush (011-443 3389).

THE GLOOM OF LIVING Beah Duff for Alabama-born Rebecca Gilman's drama of exiled and danger in the trailer park. Kallin. Hurler (011-443 3389).

KRAPP'S LAST TAPE Edward Petherbridge's touring performance as Beckett's ancient senilest replying

last time. Also the rarely performed *Breach* — duration: 95 seconds. Arts Theatre (0171-638 3334).

LORD OF THE FLIES William Golding's wild tale of terror and death on a remote island, adapted by Nigel Williams and directed by Marcus Porter for the Theatre Co. Lyric, W6 (0181-741 6701). (5)

THE MEMORY OF WATER Alison Steadman, Samantha Bond and Julia Sawalha star in Shaghagh Stephenson's acclaimed drama of Jewish refugees. Watlington (0171-638 9667).

THE STREET OF CROCODILES Welcome return for Theatre de Complicité's inventive staging of Bruno Schull's magical recollections of pre-Nazi Poland. Queens (011-443 3389).

VASSA Sheila Hancock heads a terrific cast in Gail's new drama. Howard Davies directs a new version for the Almeida season. Albany (0171-369 1730).

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

James Christopher's choice of the latest movies

NEW RELEASES

MEET JOE BLACK (12): Brad Pitt's comic, charming Joe Black, aka Death, helps Anthony Hopkins's media tycoon to introduce him to the joys of life. Director Martin Brest tries to give equal credibility to both characters, but ends up with a long-winded, uneven melodrama. Claire Forlani supplies the bewitching love interest.

THE OPPOSITE OF SEX (15): Christine Ricci plays a lonely, lonely 16-year-old who seduces a boy's step-brother by stealing his boyfriend and high-tailing it to L.A. A blistering comedy on political correctness.

BUTTONED UP (no cert): Ingenious low-budget comedy film by Peter Zelenka that stitches six stories about modern movies into a dizzy chain of quality, sometimes lively, coincidences.

DOBERMANN (15): Stylish French thriller movie by Jean Kounen with Vincent Cassel as the charismatic leader of a gang of ultraviolent bank robbers. Fabulously chic, grossly amusing, and awesomely incorrect.

SOUR GRAPES (15): Stomach dressed up as a film by Larry David. Two couples (Bierke and Steven Weber) fall out over a potpourri in Atlantic city. Stars getting mildly amusing when Weber's brain surgeon accidentally amputates a patient.

CURRENT **LITTLE VOICE** (15): Mark Herman's wonderful version of Jim Carver's stage hit. Jane Horrocks sings glorious songs of love and loss. Michael Caine, Ewan McGregor, Brenda Blethyn and Jim Broadbent make an excellent cast.

THE SIEGE (15): Denzel Washington, Arnette Bening, and Bruce Willis tug over each other's backbones as they try and defuse an Arab terrorist offensive in Manhattan. Chillingly real, beautifully acted.

IN (15): Low-budget sci-fi adventure by David Aronoff that charts the madness of a genius mathematician who is haunted by nightmares and money-mad investors. Sean Connery is the mesmerizing lead.

ARTS

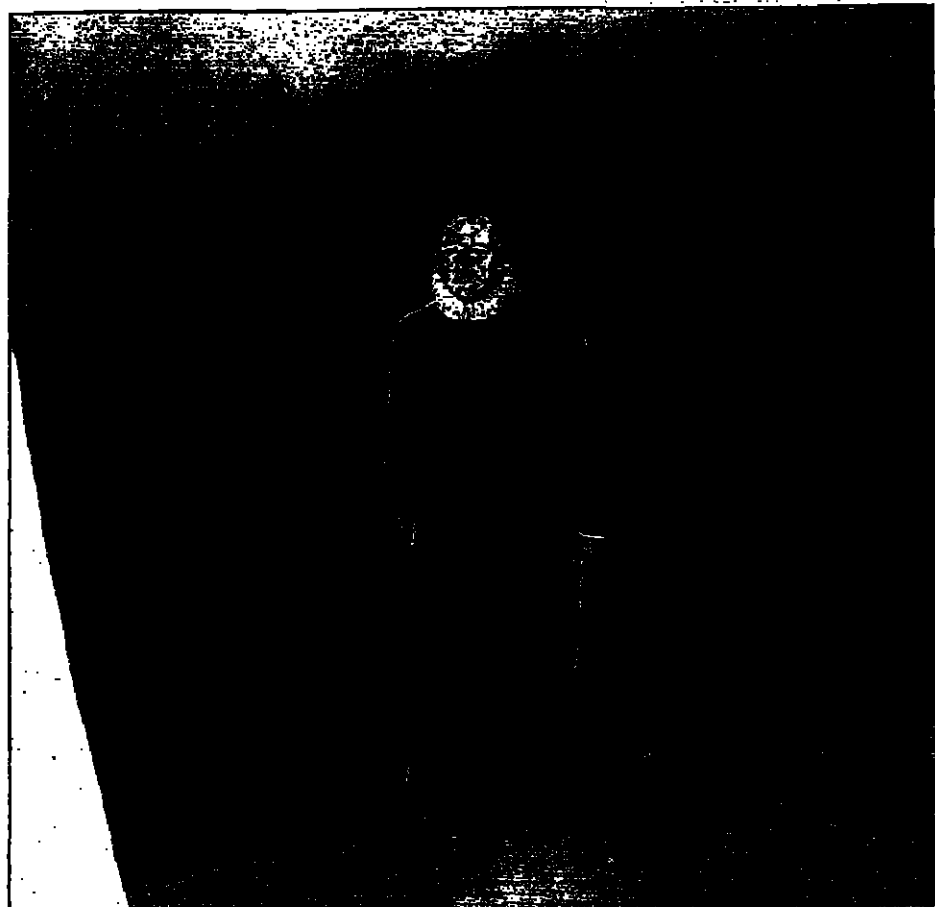
Whether loved or loathed, Julian Schnabel now demands our respect, says Rachel Campbell-Johnston

Julian Schnabel comes with a pre-packaged reputation. The centre-spread of the 1980s New York art world, he was famed as the biggest, brashest, most bombastic artist in America: an habitué of its glitziest parties, a feature of its glossiest magazines. His personality was as publicised as his painting, and to many the soaring career of this Bronx boy made millionaires came to represent all that was achievable through sheer force of self-belief. Schnabel became a symbol of the American Dream.

But the British were reluctant to buy into this transatlantic commodity. When Schnabel last showed here, more than ten years ago, the hackles of the critics were raised. He was the product of a preposterously overinflated American art market, they said. Branded as a consummate marketing man, Schnabel was attacked as an arrogant, opinionated egomaniac, a brash American brat whose work had all the weight of a publicity stunt.

Such vitriol makes one wonder. In the art market Schnabel is a heavyweight. His pieces have been acquired by many of the major galleries, by the Pompidou, the Whitney and the Tate. They have changed hands for more than \$1 million. Suddenly, the critics' animosity begins to seem suspiciously similar to the pique of some likely lad out on the town, meeting a prize fighter in some basement bar, picks a fight and takes a pop at him, just to prove that he's not impressed. Surely any artist who can shake up such extreme reactions, such an inflammatory cocktail of aggression and praise, is worth a closer look?

The abandoned energy of the works in Schnabel's new show at the South London Gallery is striking: epic arenas flailed with paint, three canvases looming against the stark white walls. They were painted for an Ancient Roman temple, the Maison Carré at Nîmes. And the context was to provide the inspiration. "I was thinking about gladiatorial contests," Schnabel says, "and about the bullfights at Nîmes. When a bull dies it draws in blood across the sand." In his



Julian Schnabel's Portrait of José Ramón Artero, with characteristic splash of white paint

painting AD, the red paint smears wounds across the rough, raw cloth.

Working on these paintings in his roofless Long Island studio, hurling a pigment-drenched tangle of paint at the surfaces, Schnabel spread himself against billowing canvases wrenched from their stretchers by sudden winds. "I felt like Captain Ahab, beckoning from the dead," he says. And suddenly it's easy to imagine this thicket man, with up-thrust beard and fist aloft, roaring at the tempest and the great white canvas. Suddenly you can imagine the streaking wind and blazoned light, and find their traces in his work. As images and associations stream unstructured from his mind, Schnabel reveals his greatest talent: to reel listeners into his enthusiasms. "Painting is like whaling," he explains. "Casting out into the ocean, seeing what you can get. I think of these works as the banners or flags of some vast eternity, of heaven."

But the huge canvases of his triptych are quite different from the mock period portraits which Schnabel displays alongside them in his current show. Full-length Velázquez-style figures gleam sickly behind a lurid glaze. There is a stylistic disparity which breeds doubt. Where dedication to a single passion is often taken as proof of authenticity, Schnabel is threateningly omnivorous. Superficial, many have said. Since he first gained public notice with por-

traits painted on a surface of china shards — instant Cubism on a cup — he has moved restlessly from Abstraction to Expressionism to Conceptualism and back again. He has recorded a rock album. He has made a film about the graffiti



'In his London show, Schnabel reveals his greatest talent: to reel listeners into his enthusiasms'

artist Jean-Michel Basquiat's life. He is currently working on another movie, about the Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas. He devours all media with gluttonous voracity, seemingly mindless of the need for native or slow-earned skill.

While the broad theme of time informs all the works in this show, Schnabel is dismissive of formulaic practices. The white enamel splashed across the surface of his portraits represents a veil of temporality. And yet it is absent from one of the pictures. "I don't think I need the same tools, or the same kind of solutions, for each painting," he explains.

Schnabel simply allows his own energy and enthusiasm, his own violently tossing and turning ideas, to create the binding force for his art. There is a sense that they are valid simply because it was he who made them. And in this sense Schnabel becomes a role model for the Brit-pack artists who arrogate if ironic self-belief has become characteristic. Of course the more traditional art appreciator will complain that Schnabel has little ability; that, put quite simply, he can't actually paint. Art colleges all over Britain are turning out students who can represent the nude, who can compose and model and draw better than Schnabel has ever done. But if art is about an individual's expression, about contemporary cultural comment and the innovative interpretation of the mood of an age, then the worse Schnabel seems as a technician or craftsman, the more interesting he becomes as an artist.

Julian Schnabel, South London Gallery, 65 Peckham Road, London SE1 (0171-703 6120) until February 28.

GALLERIES

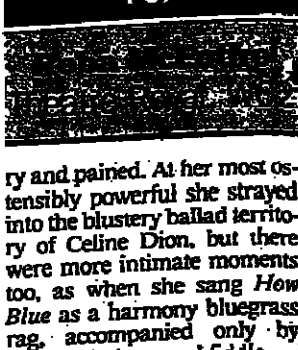
Provocative Mr Schnabel

I f ever a performer embodied the gulf that has separated country music from British popular taste over the past 20 years, it is Reba McEntire. The 44-year-old singer, originally from Oklahoma, released her first album in 1978, since when she has sold more records than either Tammy Wynette or Dolly Parton. But until recently McEntire was virtually unknown in this country. "We've got a lot of catching up to do," she informed the audience at the Theatre Royal on Sunday night at the tail-end of her first British tour.

The ensuing set incorporated many of the key songs from her career. From the opening bars of *Why Haven't I Heard From You*, McEntire assumed command of the fiercely raked stage, while her tenacious band kept out of the spotlight. Their sound was in the modern country-rock idiom — dominated by guitars, horns and a solid backbeat while the pedal steel and fiddle were relegated to the margins — and it was easy to hear why, virtually alone of her peers from the 1970s and 1980s, McEntire has flourished in the era of Garth Brooks.

McEntire's speciality is the cheating song, and on numbers such as *What's in New England* and *You Lie* her tone was simultaneously accusatory

POP



and pained. At her most ostensibly powerful she strayed into the blustery ballad territory of Celine Dion, but there were more intimate moments too, as when she sang *How Blue* as a harmony bluegrass rag, accompanied only by acoustic guitars and fiddle.

Although she wrote none of them, various songs were linked to snippets of autobiographical information, including sentimental descriptions of her father's heart bypass surgery (*The Greatest Man I Never Knew*), and the night in 1991 when seven members of her band died in a plane crash (*For My Broken Heart*).

However, the high point of the show was a searing version of her Grammy award-winning song *Does He Love You*, a duet with backing singer Linda Davis playing the role of the Other Woman. The two women, each ring-fenced in their own circle of light, confronted each other with harshly opposing viewpoints, and a rich vein of highly charged emotion was explored.

DAVID SINCLAIR

Black Velvet

FOR someone whose career has been lived in rock's shadow corners, John Cale has recently been spending a lot of time in the limelight. Within the past month, there has been a BBC documentary, the publication of his autobiography and now his first tour in 15 years. And there's a compilation album out soon.

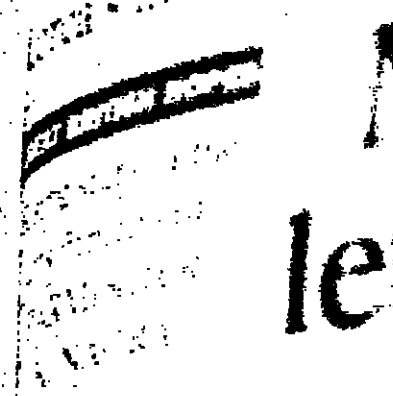
But, despite all this personal attention, Cale remains better known for his associations than for his solo projects. The most famous of those connections is, of course, with Lou Reed and the Velvet Underground. Press extracts of his book have dwelt almost exclusively on his time with that seminal 1960s band and its figurehead — even the advance publicity for the extracts used Reed's photo, not Cale's.

His live show, though, goes some way to righting the balance. At Cambridge's Corn Exchange there was only a passing reference to the Velvets, in a song from the tribute album to Andy Warhol, *Songs for Drella*. Otherwise, Cale's set drew from the mix of the experimental and the classical, of pure pop and punk passion, that has marked his restless musical life.

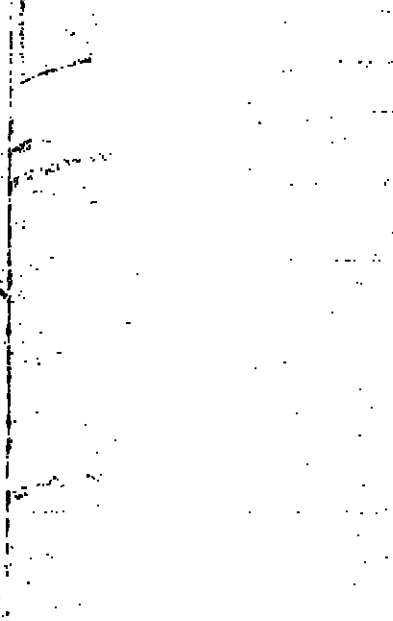
Cale began with three settings of Dylan-Thomson poems

JOHN STREET

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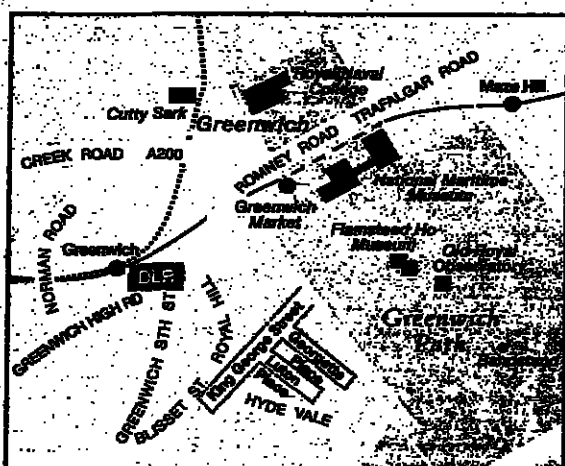
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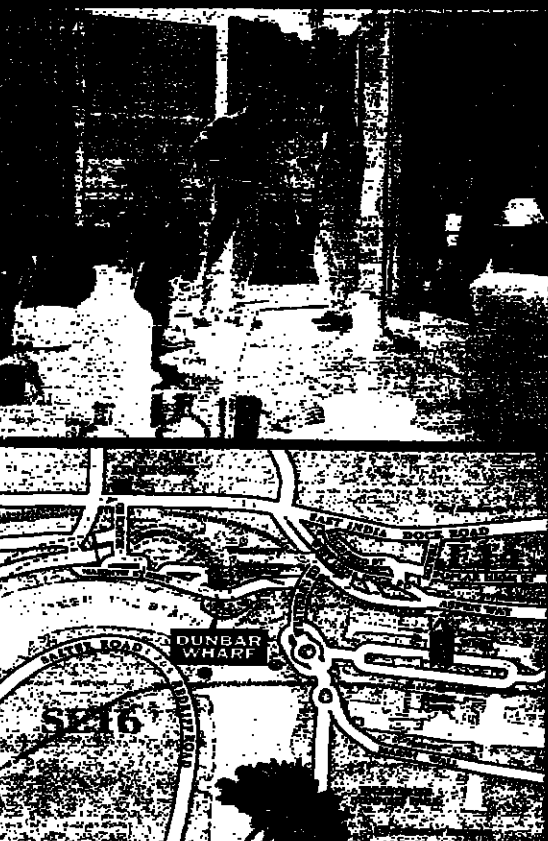
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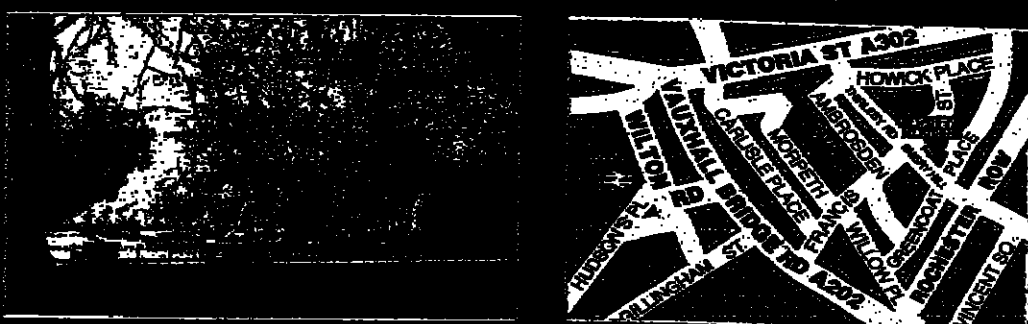
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*** World Bank ***

Carl Evans on a promising point-to-point trainer

Dalton making rapid strides through ranks

Strike-rates have become a fashionable assessment of a trainer's worth, which makes the winners-to-runners ratio of point-to-point trainer Heather Dalton worth noting.

Mrs Dalton, based near Tetford, in Shropshire, saddled 22 winners from 33 runners last season and also recorded five seconds, two thirds and two fourths. That is a strike-rate to be proud of in any sport at any grade and there are few easy races at present in the competitive business of point-to-pointing.

Lute wonder people are comparing Dalton to her friend, Venetia Williams. Some well-known owners have taken note too and have placed their young stock under her care. John Hales, former to be associated with One Man, has sent her a five-year-old half-brother to the famous grey, while Alan Brazier and bloodstock agent David Minion are two others who have enjoyed success under Rules and now patronise her yard.

They also gain in having a champion to partner their horses in races—Dalton's success helped her husband, Andrew, become joint-national champion last season with 33 wins, a figure matched by Herfordshire's Julian Frithwell.

This time last year Mrs Dalton, 32, was about to embark on her third season as a five-year-old and had 11 horses under her care. Now her string numbers 24, expectations are high and numerous young horses are undergoing a course in excellence at an academy where their mental attitude is considered as important as fitness.

"We are careful not to run horses when they are not right," Dalton said, while reflecting on her success. "We get a lot worked out before we get anywhere near the race-course."

Comparisons with Miss Williams do not faze her—they both rode as amateurs and worked together for former trainer John Edwards.

"We don't get much time to chat, but I phone her when she has a winner, and I admire



Dalton with Shoon Wind, ridden by her husband, Andrew, at their Shropshire farm

what she has achieved," Dalton said. She knows many people expect her to be taking on her friend before long, but said: "I have no plans yet to train under Rules, but I don't say it will never happen."

Attention to detail and a near paranoid search for the best in each horse drives her forward, helped by her husband and his sister, Lorna, whose unofficial role as assistant trainer is vital. They spearhead a yard where horses get the best available.

Rugs look as though they have just been unwrapped, tack shines and stables sparkle—no surprising since

many have just been built. Demand for a place at the yard is outstripping her ability to get staff, but she copes by working late into the night, juggling her role as mum to a three-year-old daughter with being mistress to a yard of mainly young horses. Their good manners under saddle are a notable aspect of this tuition.

"We do have a lot of young horses and they are susceptible to all sorts of problems, but I like training them, bringing them through and teaching them to use themselves properly," she said. "We spend time putting them through their paces on the flat so they develop and use their bodies."

Solha, an ex-chaser who won six times for the yard last season and has become an ambassador for his trainer, is fit and ready to run again while the evergreen Shoon Wind, now 16, is sleek in coat and looking half his age.

At the other end of the age range, watch out for the five-year-olds, Azante and Atoski, this season, while Oh So Droll, O'Flaherty's and Garrison King are others to note.

Point-to-pointing has given National Hunt racing a stream of talent recently, mostly in the form of young jockeys and horses, but Mrs Dalton could one day emerge as a formidable trainer.

Fracture threatens Princeful's career

JENNY PITMAN was yesterday only "hoping" that her high-class staying hider, Princeful, will be able to race again. X-rays show that he fractured a pedal-bone in his left hind leg when brought down on his first run over fences at Doncaster on Monday.

The trainer, who initially thought the gelding had sprained a joint, said Princeful had "a comfortable night" but added: "The prognosis for a return to racing, while we are hopeful, must be guarded."

A fractured pedal-bone is a potentially career-ending injury and caused the retirement of three-time Gold Cup winner Arkle in 1968.

Pitman had high hopes that Princeful would be able to win the millennium Gold Cup, and had even entered him for this year's race before he had jumped a fence in public.

Princeful won the Boursprent Stayers' Hurdle at the Cheltenham Festival in 1998 and gained another grade one win, after a prolonged duel with Deano's Beeno, in the Sturminster Long Walk Hurdle at Ascot last week.

Richard Dunwoody, who rode Princeful, aggravated an old neck injury when the pair were brought down. The former champion jockey was forced onto the sidelines for ten weeks with the same injury last summer. However, after receiving treatment yesterday he plans to ride out tomorrow before returning to race-riding at Ascot on Friday.

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Lingfield Park

Going standard
12.50 (9), 1. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 2. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 3. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 4. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 5. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 6. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 7. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 8. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 9. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 10. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 11. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 12. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 13. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 14. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 15. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 16. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 17. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 18. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 19. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 20. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 21. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 22. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 23. Another Nightmares (T. Williams, 5-1), 24. 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TENNIS

Rusedski makes early call on survival instincts

FROM JULIAN MUSCAT, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT, IN MELBOURNE

GREG RUSEDSKI was entitled to savour his first victory of the year at the Australian Open here yesterday. The Briton shrugged off a back problem, a shortage of confidence, a rowdy chant-leader, an overzealous ballboy and Scott Draper, a man bristling with intent, to put the smile back on his uncharacteristically somber face.

Rusedski's 7-6, 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 victory was gained the hard way after Draper, world-ranked No 43, played a poor tie-break to drop the opening set. He then threatened to overwhelm Rusedski, who fended off four break points in the third before snaring the set, on his first opportunity, with a winning volley off the frame of his racket. "You buy the racket, you might as well use the whole thing," he quipped.

Draper then squandered the initiative in the fourth-set tie-break. He made three successive errors, the first a double fault when leading 5-4, to hand Rusedski, seeded No 8, a second-round encounter with Paul Goldstein, a qualifier from the United States.

Memories of Rusedski's two first-round defeats this year dissolved in the wake of his triumph. However, he has fresh concerns on his mind after requiring course treatment to his back.

"I had a few muscle spasms after practice on Friday," he said. "It turned out fine after a good stretch and some anti-inflammatory tablets." Rusedski coped manfully with a swirling wind, which can affect his service rhythm. "These are the sort of days where upsets can easily happen," he said.

Happen, they certainly did. Carlos Moya, seeded No 4 after a banner year in 1998, succumbed to Nicolas Pietrangeli, a quarter-finalist here last year. Kiefer obliged 6-7, 6-4, 7-6, 6-3 and now has an excellent opportunity to reach the same stage.

Two other seeds in Kiefer's half of the draw perished yesterday. Albert Costa, seeded No 12, fell in four sets to Martin Damm, while Cedric Pioline, seeded No 13, was spared no embarrassment by Lleyton Hewitt, the emerging talent from Australia.



Rusedski shows his delight after winning an eventful match against Draper in four sets

Agassi skips Davis Cup

ANDRE AGASSI yesterday ruled himself out of the United States team to face Great Britain in the Davis Cup, ensuring that his country will be seriously under-strength for the tie in Birmingham on April 2 (Julian Muscat writes).

Agassi, ranked No 6 in the world, joins Pete Sampras, the world No 1, and Michael Chang in bypassing the tie that brings together the two nations that established the Davis Cup 100 years ago.

"It doesn't fit into my plans with reference to my goals

this year," Agassi said after routing Herman Gumeny, of Argentina, in the first round of the Australian Open.

Agassi said that the row he had with the United States Tennis Federation over the venue for his country's semi-final defeat by Italy last year had influenced his decision. "I was very frustrated and drained emotionally through it all and that, I'm sure, played a part," he said.

The United States will choose their two singles players from Todd Martin, Jan-Michael Gambill and Jim

Courier. All have confirmed their availability, but Greg Rusedski, the Great Britain No 2, kept his guard up on hearing of Agassi's absence.

"Obviously it's going to be a little better than seeing Agassi and Sampras across the net," Rusedski ventured. "But Martin, the way he's playing, will probably be ranked in the top ten by then and Gambill has beaten Tim [Henman] every time they have played. It is going to be very difficult for us."

Britain meet the United States in the first round of the World Group.



Kournikova hits a forehand during her victory over Craybas

RUGBY UNION

Why England failed to reach an accord

BY MARK SOUSTER

RUGBY supporters could be forgiven for feeling non-plussed by the Byzantine events of the past 24 hours. One minute England are out of the Five Nations Championship, the next they are back in, having made a rapid volte-face. The root cause of the dispute, on the surface at least, is the revenue from multimillion-pound television deals.

In 1996, England broke with tradition and signed a five-year contract with BSkyB worth £87.5 million, £22.5 million of which was earmarked for club rugby, and the remaining £65 million for the Five Nations matches at Twickenham and autumn fixtures against southern hemisphere countries, plus other club games, including the Varsity match.

The fact that England chose to act unilaterally led to their temporary expulsion from the championship at that time. They were readmitted only after they had signed the peace accord, which set out two fundamental principles — that the countries would act collectively and revenue would be distributed equally. This was not

possible in the short term because of the BSkyB deal, but holds true after 2002 when the contract expires.

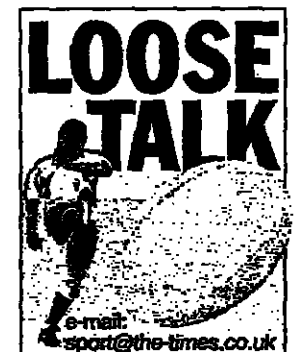
At the time, England agreed to have a valuation put on the Five Nations element of the £65 million; their alleged failure to live up to that pledge led directly to their expulsion on

Ivan Francescato, the former Italy centre, has died after a suspected heart attack at his home in Treviso. Francescato, 31, won 38 caps between 1990 and 1997 and was central to the emergence of rugby in his country. He was the youngest of four brothers, all Italy international players.

Monday, from 1996 to mid-1998 the parties attempted to reach agreement between themselves; when it subsequently proved impossible to agree, an independent valuer, an accountant named Arthur Harward, was appointed. At that point the Rugby Football

Reivers salute the end of a sad ferret tale

THE Edinburgh Reivers spent a fruitless time in Wales last week for two Challenge Trophy games against Pontypridd and Caerphilly, both of which were washed out. People were puzzled to see the players turn up for one training session wearing black armbands and then observe a ten-second silence in memory of Alan Tait's pet white ferret Rex, for it is he, in missing in action, presumed dead. Tait was inconsolable. Rex is the best ferret he has had and has killed thousands of rabbits in his time. According to Craig Chalmers, it was the most exciting thing that happened all week. Tait's feelings on the countryside are well-known. He boycotted Tony Blair's reception at No 10 for the 1997 Lions in protest at the Government's policy on hunting.



punching a player? No names have been revealed, but one witness said the touch judge took exception to a tackle by a Maidenstone player, stormed on the pitch and berated the offender, waving his flag in his face. The player brushed the flag away, only for the official to retaliate with a right hook. The referee dismissed him and called for a replacement. So far no disciplinary action has been taken.

Tasty tulips
Spotted in London's Dover Street Wine Bar in the small hours last week, after the Rugby Writers' dinner, were Gareth Rees and Sean Lineen, indulging in a tulip-eating contest. The Canadian and the Kiwi-Scot each chomped their way through three — stems included — before declaring an honourable draw. Lineen said: "I wasn't able to go to the toilet for three days!"

Replay it again
The Teleret experiment in South Africa proved so successful that SANZAR — the combined South Africa, New Zealand and Australia rugby authority — is to approach the International Board for permission to extend the project during the Super 12 and other domestic competitions. The pilot scheme covered ten under-21 games and took less than a minute to view replays from three different angles and inform the referee.

Touchy judge
Dog bites man? A touch judge was sent off during the Chichester versus Maidenstone London III South East league match just before Christmas... for

become used to people questioning your parenthood? Peter Jenkins, team manager of Hendy, from the Welsh League fifth division, confirmed that Croft was a favourite at the club in his youth. "He played for us as a schoolboy before joining Glamorgan," he said.



Croft: Hendy favourite

Team talk-in
Never let it be said that top clubs do not communicate with their members — unless it is London Scottish. Leicester have issued a five-point explanation over the difficulties of fielding their strongest XV on a regular basis (injuries, international requirements etc). The club has also offered a commitment that admission prices for "friendly or minor competition games" in future will reflect the strength of the playing XV and the significance the club attaches to specific competitions. The first of a series of meetings will be held next Thursday, when members will have the chance to air their views.

Rugby for Rugby
Rugby's coming home... in World Cup year, Rugby School, the birthplace of the game, is hosting a series of youth development courses during the Easter and summer holidays. They are organised by the Academy of Rugby, which has invited 12,000 schoolboys from all over the country. It is the first time the school, where William Webb Ellis picked up the ball and ran, has committed itself to a long-term rugby programme.

□ Congratulations to those sopranos from Wasps who raised more than £1,700 for Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children at two carol singing sessions before Christmas. At 9am yesterday, Lawrence Dailiglo, Mark Weedon, Shane Roiser and Fraser Waters were on parade at the hospital to present the cheque, meet staff and children and tour the wards. And all that before training!

SNOOKER

Small wonder lifts Scotland

BY PHIL YATES

CHRIS SMALL, the least experienced member of snooker's reassembled "dream team", played a vital role as Scotland continued their relentless progress towards a place in the Nations Cup final by beating Wales 8-3 in Newcastle yesterday.

The pedigree of John Higgins, Stephen Hendry and Alan McManus is well-known, but with two semi-final appearances in world-ranking events the highlight of his eight-year professional career, Small's ability to cope with the unique demands of team play was open to question.

Small, however, won both of his singles frames during Scotland's 8-3 victory over England on Saturday and was equally impressive against the Welsh, who had high hopes of an upset after overcoming Ireland 8-3 in their opening match.

"It has been a great start to the tournament for me as an

individual and obviously for the lads as a whole," Small said. "I feel quite relaxed, having three guys like I've got alongside me, but it's certainly different from just thinking about yourself."

Small partnered Hendry to beat the pairing of Darren Morgan and Dominic Dale, made a 66 break in defeating Dale and calmly stroked in a tricky black to a middle pocket against Matthew Stevens.

McManus, who initiated the rout with a 100 break against Mark Williams in the first frame, also won his two singles and Hendry prevailed in two of three, but all agreed that Small was the outstanding performer.

Scotland, whose last international involvement resulted in an effortless triumph at the 1996 World Cup, must now beat either Northern Ireland on Friday or Ireland on Saturday to guarantee their participation in the final.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

FOOTBALL	
Kick-off 7.30 unless stated	
FA Cup	
Third-round replay	
Nottingham v Sheffield Utd (7.45)	
Scottish League	
J. Ferguson v East Fife	
Third division	
Dumbarton v Berwick	
Tennent's Scottish Cup	
Second-round replay	
Cathryn v Queen's Park	
FA YOUTH CUP: Third round	
Doncaster v Northampton (7.30)	
NORTH WESTERN YOUNG LEAGUE	
First round, second leg: Rochdale v Wigan	
Second round: Wigan v Rochdale	
NORTH WESTERN YOUNG LEAGUE	
First round, second leg: Wigan v Rochdale	
RUGBY UNION	
Welsh Challenge Trophy	
Pool A	
Aberystwyth v Nant Gwynedd (7.00)	
Carmarthen v Gwent (7.15)	
Pontypridd v Edinburgh (7.15)	
Pool B	
Brighouse v Glasgow Falcons (7.15)	
Neepawa v Blue Bulls (7.00)	
CLUB MATCH: Cambridge University v RAF (7.15)	
OTHER SPORT	
BASKETBALL: Basketball League	
Manchester v Nottingham (7.00)	
Sheffield v London (7.00)	
Sheffield v London (7.00)	
Sheffield v London (7.00)	
Sheffield v London (7.00)	

SNOW REPORTS									
Station	Depth (cm)	U	P	Conditions	Run to Resort	On/Off	Weather (°C)	Last	Snow
Andorra	80	100	Good	Open	Powder	Fine	2	17/1	
Austria	20	80	Good	Hard	Varied	Fine	1	14/1	
Kitzbühel	20	70	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	4	14/1	
St Anton	30	300	Fair	Open	Varied	Sun	0	14/1	
Chamonix	100	140	Good	Open	Powder	Fair	-1	18/1	
France	70	180	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	3	18/1	
Alpe d'Huez	50	145	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	0	14/1	
Argentière	80	220	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	3	14/1	
Flaine	65	110	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun	2	14/1	
La Clusaz	68	108	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun	3	14/1	
La Tignes	64	180	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun	4	14/1	
Les Arcs	64	180	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun	4	14/1	
Megeve	64	180	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun	4	14/1	
Méribel	64	180	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun	4	14/1	
Tignes	64	180	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun	4	14/1	
Val Thorens	64	180	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun	4	14/1	
Val d'Isère	64	180	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun	4	14/1	
Italy	45	180	Good	Open	Varied	Fine	0	14/1	
Cortina	45	80	Good	Open	Powder	Sun	2	14/1	
M di Campiglio	60	120	Good	Open	Crusty	Sun	6	13/1	
Switzerland	70	70	Good	Open	Varied	Cloud	-3	17/1	
Crans Montana	20	115	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	6	14/1	
Davos	45	130	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	-10	14/1	
Grindelwald	35	130	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	2	14/1	
Kristers	35	130	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	2	14/1	
St Moritz	40	80	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	-2	13/1	
Verbier	20	180	Hard	Open	Varied	Sun	-3	14/1	
Villars	40	120	Fair	Open	Varied	Fair	-3	14/1	
Zermatt	42	130	Hard	Open	Varied	Fine	-2	17/1	
United States	75	95	Good	Open	Powder	Cloud	-3	18/1	
Alpine	75	95	Good	Open	Powder	Cloud	-3	18/1	

http://www.skiclub.co.uk L = lower slopes, U = upper slopes

A little rationality, s'il vous plait

A wonderful parodist named David McGillivray once wrote a French farce called *Chase Me Down Farnale Avenue, S'il Vous Plait*. The set comprised nothing but doors. The cast went in and out of them, and then out and in of them, with — as McGillivray himself gravely might have put it — hilarious consequences.

It was belly-achingly funny and could not be taken seriously for a second, even as a parody, because it parodied a farce at the same time as it parodied farce. All you could do was sit back and enjoy it.

Rugby union has become rather like that. Lie back and think of Farnale Avenue. *Jouez Au Rugby S'il Vous Plait* has become a parody of a farce. It has gone beyond weeping, beyond anger and ascended to the rarefied McGillivrayesque heights of pure laughter.

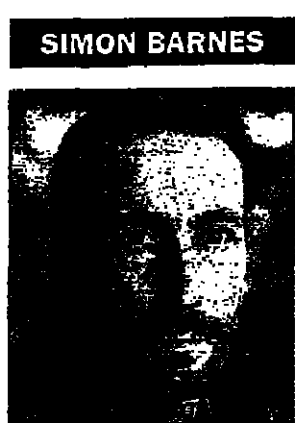
England is the character that sees most of the action and action, of course, consists of going in and out of doors. Yesterday morning, I was writing about England's expulsion

from the Five Nations Championship. Now, as the evening begins and my earlier piece has been refiled to the wicker file in the corner, I am writing about England's return to the Five Nations Championship.

Which will soon be, of course, the Six Nations Championship, because Italy are supposed to join next year. Or perhaps it will be the Five Nations Championship, if England are thrown out again. Or — well, permit anything you like, no bit of nonsense is too much for the subject.

There was an Englishman, a Scotsman and an Irishman, and they sat down to talk about rugby. Push it as far as you dare, and then dare a little more: those are McGillivray Rules and rugby union adheres to them.

It is not the first time that England have been thrown out and come straight back in again. Or perhaps they were only threatened with exit through the nearest door. Or perhaps the other four nations all walked out through their own separate doors, there being, as I say, plenty of doors



Midweek View

on the set. I forget. I really can't be expected to keep up with every twist and turn of the plot, especially when my belly aches so much from laughing.

So what else is happening in rugby union? Have you heard the one about the club that is buying up the other club in a cunning plan to ensure promotion? Rugby union made such an appalling mess of amateurism and it has made a still

worse mess of professionalism. Amateurism was a farce, professionalism in rugby union is a parody of a farce.

But then you look back to those rather splendid international of the autumn — resurgent Wales, England beating the All Blacks. And you begin to get a little irritated as well. Sports incessant squabbles about money are not only wearisome, they are also compromising our pleasures.

I suspect most of the people who take pleasure in sport find themselves in the same philosophical position. I don't care what you do or how you divvy up the loot or who's to blame or who's the good guy or who's the bad: just get on to the pitch and bloody well play.

The game's the thing. And not playing the game is — well, not playing the game. And any kind of action that loses our sporting action will also lose our sympathy. Recently, basketball ended its dispute: 190 days of deadlock about how best to dispose of US\$2 billion. One or other of the two sides — players or owners — must have felt badly done by.

My heart has been steadily

not bleeding for them. Then we had the recent episode of the West Indies cricket team, sulking in their tents at Heathrow while matches were supposed to be going on in South Africa.

The dispute, and the subsequent Test series, when it was eventually played — just completed, with South Africa winning 5-0 — was a disaster. It is a blow from which West Indies cricket, and therefore international cricket, will take a good long while to recover.

A sporting dispute is something that involves and invades everyone who cares for sport. It feels — perhaps irrationally — like a personal attack. It does, after all, affect ourselves and our pleasures.

People have said that agents, or sponsors, or television, will kill sport. Or journalists. But it is sport that is killing sport: sportsmen are killing sport, and so — and especially — are sporting administrators.

Death in the countryside

Midsomer Murders
ITV, 8.00pm

Welcome back to John Nethers' DCI Barnaby, who is unusual among television detectives in having a happy home life. As we learn tonight, he has even managed to stay married to the same woman for 25 years, though trust a murder case to do its best to wreck the celebrations. It is a particularly gruesome one, startlingly so for the pretty rural Midsomer story. The victim is a property developer whose plan for a retirement home and golf course was hugely unpopular. But if it would take a minute to accommodate all the suspects, why should anybody have bothered to kill a man who was already dying of a brain tumour? The investigation is patient and low-key, perhaps a little too slow at times, but there is good character work, notably by Richard Briers as a hen-pecked vicar.

Mercy Blues
BBC2, 9.00pm

The second dispatch from inside the Merseyside Police is again a story of frustrated officers doing their best with limited resources. The focus this time is on Operation Vixen, an initiative to deal with gang warfare on the streets of Liverpool. To set the scene we are treated to video footage of a man, letting loose with a 45 semi-automatic on his customers who have just thrown him out of a club. Nightclubs are often used to sell drugs and doormen are paid to discourage rival dealers. Armed police patrol the city in search of key targets identified by the Vixen team. One man is arrested but not guilty. Another has to be released without charge. While DI Garry Watson, head of Vixen, bopes desperately for a break, his cost-conscious superiors are wondering whether Vixen should continue.

Bleed on the Carpet: Ice-Cream Wars
BBC2, 9.50pm

Another entertaining travel through the turbulent reaches of business recalls a David and Goliath battle in, of all things, ice-cream. Goliath is Hågen-Dazs, the misleadingly Danish name for a product as American as apple pie, which by the 1980s had more than 70 per cent of the luxury ice-



Husband and wife traders Maggie and Roger Burton in Fish Tales (BBC1, 10.15pm)

cream market. Enter David in the form Ben and Jerry's, a rival ice-cream launched by two hippies and distinguished by its weird flavours and chunky texture. Despite dominating the market, Hågen-Dazs tried to stifle its fledgling rival by cutting off its main distribution source. Ben and Jerry's went to court and won. The twist is that Ben and Jerry's is in turn being accused of trying to shut out a smaller competitor, a company ironically started by a former Hågen-Dazs president.

Inside Story: Fish Tales
BBC1, 10.15pm

Neil Grant is a film-maker with a talent for spotting characters. He was producer of *Hotel*, a series rich in them, and now he turns his camera on Billingsgate fish market. If you think that fish and chips is a thing of the past, think again. Dying the edict that traders must wear white, Roger Burton is all mouth and funny with it. "You're going to be better than Gordon Banks," he says, "because I'm going to get past you." Not much does. One of his customers, who matches him for savvy, is Tony Allen. At 34 Allen is a multimillionaire who made his money from the restaurant trade but still gets up early to buy his fish. "Dodger" Lewis, meanwhile, combines selling fish with trying to be discovered as a rock singer — though he must be well into his fifties.

RADIO CHOICE

The Board Game
Radio 4, 9.00pm

Luncheon quizzes and panel games have provided more grief for Radio 4 Controller James Boylston than a lunch of dodgy fish and too much white wine and his key difficulty is that for every person who likes one of the new programmes there is another who does not. I think *The Board Game* is one of the better ones because it does provide an insight into how business people think (or not). The presenter is Nigel Cassidy, a past master of the panel format, and the two regular panellists return: Peter Day and Alan Parry. Guest panellists will be offered the programme an extra space and in this series they will include the television executive Greg Dyke and Lord Haskins, the plain-speaking (and Blair-friendly) chairman of Northern Foods.

Frontiers
Radio 4, 9.00pm

There is no area of British radio that does proper justice to science, so the return of this programme is to be welcomed. It is one of the few cases where science in a demanding scientific way is presented. The particular brief of *Frontiers* is research, meaning that the programme consistently gets to the cutting edge of scientific developments. Tonight Peter Evans looks at blindness, a curious phenomenon which allows people who are technically blind to react to the correct way of doing things. They are only guessing but blindness is too widespread for that to be so. This unconscious sensory perception may have clues to the way the brain works.

RADIO 1 (BBC)

6.30am Zane Ball 6.50 Simon Mayo 12.00pm Kevin Greening 2.00 Mark Radcliffe 4.00 Chris Moyles 5.45 Newsbeat 8.00 Dave Walliams 8.30 Steve Lamacq: The Evening Session 10.00 Movie Update with Mark Kermode 10.10 John Peel 10.30am Bus Jam 1.00am Gilles Peterson 4.00 Scott Mills

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Sarah Kennedy 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan 8.30 Ken Bruce 12.00pm Jimmy Young 2.00 Ed Stewart 5.05 Johnnie Walker 7.00 Nick Ross 8.00 The Alan Parry Show 9.00 The Andy Partridge Show (9.15) 10.00 Radio 2's Big Request Line with Nick Barrowclough (9.17) 10.30 Richard Allen 12.00pm Katrina Lehn 3.00 Alex Lester

RADIO 5 LIVE (BBC)

5.00am Morning Reports 6.00 Breakfast with Julian Worraker and Victoria Derbyshire 8.00 Nick Campbell 12.00pm The Midday News 1.00pm Russell and Co 4.00 Drive, Peter Allen and Janni Garvey present the day's news and sports edition 7.00 News 7.30 Five Nations Rugby Night. A look ahead to the weekend's action. Plus, the National Lottery draw 10.00 Leighton 11.00am Late Night Live 1.00am Up All Night

VIRGIN

6.30am Chris Evans 8.30 Mark Forster 1.00pm Nick Abbot 3.00am Steve Wright 4.00am Radio 1 10.00am Steve Wright 4.00am Radio 1

TALK RADIO

6.00am Big Boyz Breakfast with David Banks and Nick Ferrari 8.00am Scott Cheshire 12.00pm Justice with Jacob 1.00am News 2.00am Radio 1 3.00am The Sports Zone 4.00am James White 1.00am Ian Collins

RADIO 3

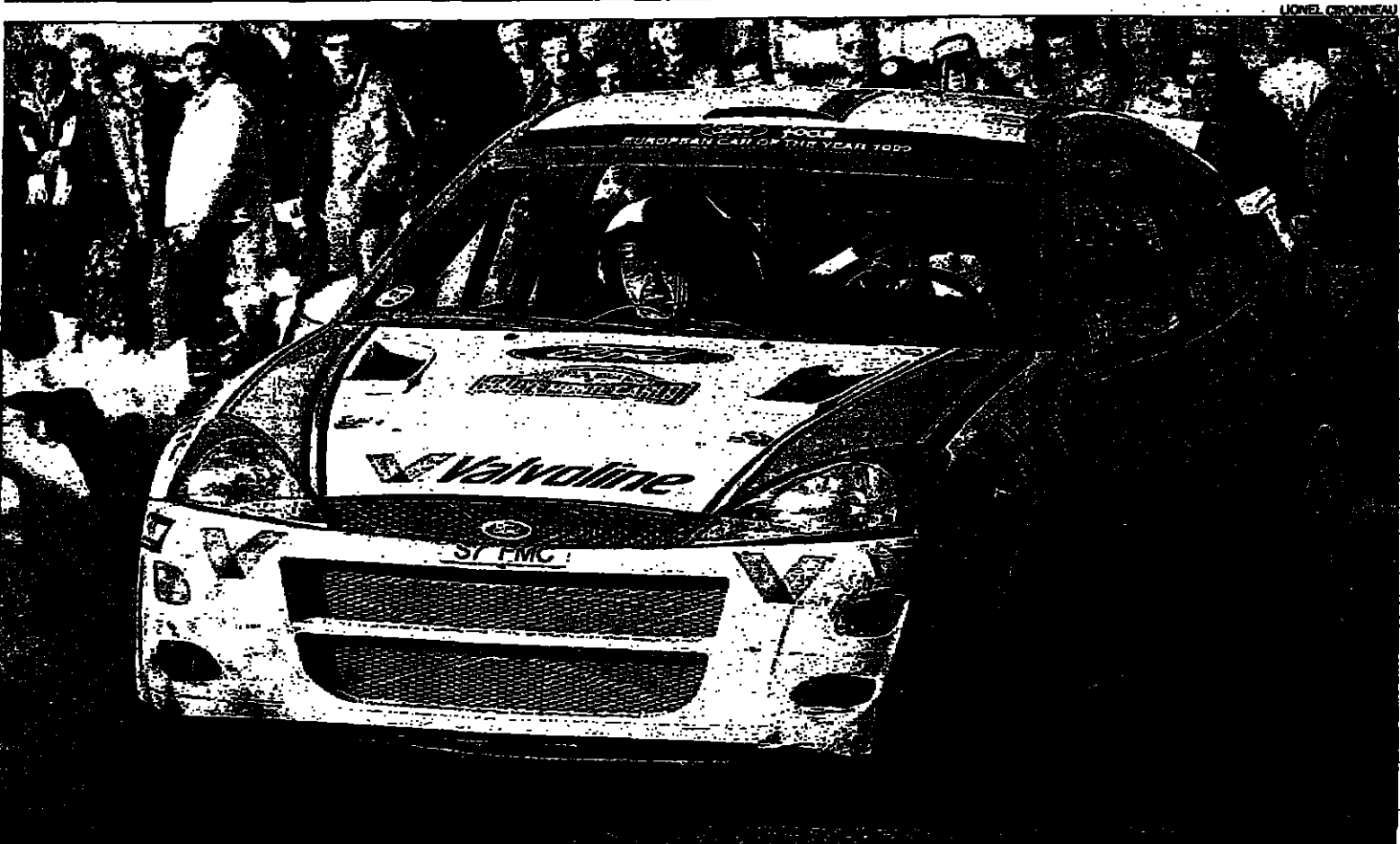
6.00am On Air with Patrice Trelawny, Includes Beethoven (Sonata in F minor, Op 2 No 1); Faure (Cantique de Jean Racine); Borodin (Polovnets Dances from Prince Igor) 9.00am Radio 3's New Music Today: C.P.E. Bach (Symphony in A, Wq182 No 4); Mozart (Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja, Die Magic Flute) 10.30am The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert Live from the Adnan Bouk Hall, Birmingham Conservatoire. Paul Lewis (piano) includes: Beethoven (Sonata No 7, Boreas elegiac; No 6, Eschmiration); Liszt (Unstimmigkeit, Diabelli; Schopold; Annes de Pelegrin; La Lugubre Sonatina, 1832 version) 2.00pm The BBC Orchestra under conductor John Neschke with Alexander Arltomov 4.00am Choral Evening Live from Wells Cathedral 5.00pm The Radio 3's Concerts tonight include the American conductor Michael Tilson Thomas 7.30pm Performance on BBC National Orchestra of Wales under Grant Llewellyn, David Jones, mezzo-soprano (Wells Cathedral, Suite No 3); Michael (Museum of the Air, first performance); Beethoven (Symphony No 3 in E flat, Op 55)

CLASSIC FM

6.00am Nick Bailey's Easter Breakfast. Scouting music and information 8.00am Henry Kelly. The Hit of the Hour and favourite places voted for in the Classic FM Top 300 12.00pm Lunchtime Requests. Jane Jones plays listeners' favourite pieces of classical music 2.00pm Concerto, Glazunov (Piano Concerto No 1 in F minor, Op 28) 3.00pm The Afternoon Romance and Continuous Classics 6.30pm Newsnight. Headlines, arts news and guests introduced by John Burningham 7.00pm Smooth Classics at Seven. John Burningham introduces evening's music 8.00pm Evening News 8.30pm The George, Walter (Das Lied von der Erde), Brahms (Aphorismen) 11.00pm News at Night. Music and conversation through the night with Alan Menn 12.00am Concerto (Piano Concerto No 1 in F minor, Op 28) 3.00am Mark Griffiths: The Early Breakfast Show

RADIO 4

6.00am On Air with Patrice Trelawny, Includes Beethoven (Sonata in F minor, Op 2 No 1); Faure (Cantique de Jean Racine); Borodin (Polovnets Dances from Prince Igor) 9.00am Radio 4's New Music Today: C.P.E. Bach (Symphony in A, Wq182 No 4); Mozart (Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja, Die Magic Flute) 10.30am The Radio 4 Lunchtime Concert Live from the Adnan Bouk Hall, Birmingham Conservatoire. Paul Lewis (piano) includes: Beethoven (Sonata No 7, Boreas elegiac; No 6, Eschmiration); Liszt (Unstimmigkeit, Diabelli; Schopold; Annes de Pelegrin; La Lugubre Sonatina, 1832 version) 2.00pm The BBC Orchestra under conductor John Neschke with Alexander Arltomov 4.00am Choral Evening Live from Wells Cathedral 5.00pm The Radio 4's Concerts tonight include the American conductor Michael Tilson Thomas 7.30pm Performance on BBC National Orchestra of Wales under Grant Llewellyn, David Jones, mezzo-soprano (Wells Cathedral, Suite No 3); Michael (Museum of the Air, first performance); Beethoven (Symphony No 3 in E flat, Op 55)



McRae and Nicky Grist, his co-driver, weave their Ford Focus into a prominent position yesterday during the journey from Gap to Monte Carlo

McRae confounds the critics

THE Hungarian Grand Prix last summer. In the baking paddock, Martin Whitaker, Ford's European head of motor sport, was hot property. News had just broken that Colin McRae was moving to the Ford rally team for a figure reported to be £6 million.

"Suddenly, every grand-prix driver contemplating a move wanted to drive for Ford," Whitaker said, with a grin. "They figured that if we were really paying a rally driver the sort of figures bandied about, then we had money to burn. That's not true. We wanted the best driver possible and we paid the market price. We think it will prove a good investment."

Five months on, Whitaker is grinning like the proverbial Cheshire cat this morning. His £6 million man is just one place off a podium finish at the Monte Carlo Rally — his first outing for Ford — in a car that most insiders had predicted would not score a point until the spring.

"Colin has driven perfectly,"

Whitaker said. "When you make a new rally car, you dare not hope for more than a finish to start with, but the fact that the car has been on the pace and has come close to setting fastest-stage times is outstanding."

McRae and the Martini Ford Focus provide potentially the most potent cocktail in the rallying world. With the Ford name likely to be superseded in Formula One by Jaguar, rallying will become Ford's leading publicity machine in Europe.

Spending millions on man and machine is not an extravagance, but an investment. A rally team needs an injection of more than £15 million annually to compete at the highest level.

Enticed by the millions and consequent trappings, such as a Jaguar for his wife, Alison, McRae only signed for Ford once he had seen the design of the radical Focus, with its secret transmission system.

"The professionalism and the dedication of the Ford boys was very tempting," McRae said. "Also, it was a rare opportunity to join a team and have input in a brand new car."

McRae is one of rallying's finest test drivers, with a seat-of-the-pants sense for a car's handling. Sadly, his technical nous did not extend to spotting the design of the water pump on the Ford's 300-horsepower

engine. If he had, the Scot might not have been so quick to sign on the dotted line.

On Sunday, the water pump was found to be illegal, but he was allowed to start at Monte Carlo under appeal.

However, if the FIA, the sport's world governing body, determines once and for all that the water pump is illegal in a meeting next month before the Swedish Rally, McRae could be temporarily on the dole. The Ford team will be out of rallying for at least two events while they hurriedly re-design the pump.

"Whether the Focus is as competitive with another water pump we will have to see," a rival team's rally engineer said. "I would doubt it."

McRae always knew that 1999 was going to be a year to test his patience. Whether the Scot has the strength of character to risk a second year out of the championship frame, though, is doubtful.

"If, at the end of this year,

the car is a disaster, I could bow out," McRae said. "But there is no way I want that to happen... in fact, it won't happen. It's not a possibility. I shall make sure of that."

McRae would have finished the leg from Gap to Monte Carlo in second place yesterday had he not gambled on using slick tyres for the precipitous Sisteron stage. Snow at the summit negated the benefit that he enjoyed on the run up and down the mountain.

"We lost around two minutes sliding about on the snow with the slick tyres, but finished the stage only 36 seconds behind the fastest time, so that proves how fast the car was on the dry, asphalt sections," McRae said.

On the next stage, Gilles Paizis, the overnight leader, lost first place when he spun his privately entered Subaru. Inheriting the lead was Tommi Makinen, the world champion, in a Mitsubishi. The team has a minute cushion with only the final four stages today remaining.

POSITIONS

MONTE CARLO RALLY (after ten Monte stages) 1. T. Makinen and R. Mansson (Ford Focus) 2. G. and H. Parizis (Ford Focus) 3. J. Kankkunen and J. Repo (Ford Focus) 4. C. McRae and N. Grist (Ford Focus) 5. D. Saino and D. Saino (Ford Focus) 6. B. Thury and S. Prevost (Ford Focus) 7. D. Saino and D. Saino (Ford Focus) 8. H. Rovanpera and R. Pietinen (Ford Focus) 9. J. Kankkunen and J. Repo (Ford Focus) 10. R. Burns and R. Reid (Ford Focus) 11. J. Kankkunen and J. Repo (Ford Focus) 12. J. Kankkunen and J. Repo (Ford Focus) 13. J. Kankkunen and J. Repo (Ford Focus) 14. J. Kankkunen and J. Repo (Ford Focus) 15. J. Kankkunen and J. Repo (Ford Focus) 16. J. Kankkunen and J. Repo (Ford Focus) 17. J. Kankkunen and J. Repo (Ford Focus) 18. J. Kankkunen and J. Repo (Ford Focus) 19. J. Kankkunen and J. Repo (Ford Focus) 20. J. Kankkunen and J. Repo (Ford Focus) 21. J. Kankkunen and J. Repo (Ford Focus) 22. J. Kankkunen and J. Repo (Ford Focus) 23. J. Kankkunen and J. Repo (Ford Focus) 24. J. 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Enigmatic variations on using a pixie hood

When you hear that the odds against deciphering Germany's Enigma code during the Second World War were many times greater than the odds against winning the National Lottery, it conjures up an image of Bletchley Park, the country house near Milton Keynes, as a vast bungalow. Here you feel puz- zled — a curious array of academi- cians, schoolboys and undergradu- ates — competing feverishly to yell "House, house!" as soon as they had cracked the latest German transmission.

Obviously it wasn't quite that weird. It was weird, Sarah Bar- ning, who worked there, recalled in *Station X* (Channel 4, that "There was one cryptographer with red hair and a red beard and he stud- ied Japanese in the evenings as a relief from his cryptography. But in the winter he wore a blue pixie hood on his head. A pixie hood's

the thing you put on babies' heads. And I always thought that was very strange. I never knew quite why he did it."

Gwen Watkins, a WAAF at Bletchley, remembered Joshi Cooper well. "He would walk round the lake every summer evening with a coffee cup. And when he'd finished his coffee he'd look in a demented way at the coffee cup as though wondering what to do with it and throw it straight over his shoulder into the lake. Every evening. These geniuses, luckily, were the people on whom our lives depend- ed. At least half of the people there I would have thought — outside Bletchley — absolutely mad," says Watkins, frankly.

Their achievement is still breath- taking. According to Tony Sale, of the Bletchley Park Trust, "If I sent just one message on an Enigma machine today, it would still take a Super Kray computer — the fastest in the world — a year to go

through searching for that one message without supporting evi- dence as to what the message set- tings might have been."

I must have taken them quite a while to twig that it even was a code. German being a jangle of consonants at the best of times. So you can imagine what sort of people they drafted in to crack it. Arthur Levinson, one of the code-breakers, remembers: "Anthropologists, Egyptologists, paleontologists and even an occa- sional lawyer turned out to have the knack." Their descendants are still engaged in similar work to- day, only this time the Germans are on our side and the indecipher- able messages concern such Euro- pean Union matters as the euro and the harmonisation of European laws.

It is quaint to see — among the riveting archive footage dug up for this four-part series — some film of

chestrated to wrong-foot the en- emy (First German Spy: "I think this Bletchley place is the nerve cen- tre of Britain's code-breaking opera- tions." Second German Spy: "Have you seen what that guy over there with that baby's blue pixie hood? I'll bet you a hundred marks that this is a lunatic asylum.")

But they weren't all code-break- ing geniuses. Geoffrey Tandy, a marine biologist, was among the first to be recruited. Nigel For- ward, a Bletchley code-breaker, re- calls how Tandy joined the team: "He was an expert in cryptograms. They're a very elementary form of biological life. And somebody said, 'Ah, cryptograms, that's what we want' and sent him to Bletchley with the slight error that they were really looking for people who were good at cryptograms." But Tandy probably survived without anybody even noticing. Compared with wearing pixie hoods and toss- ing coffee cups in the lake, being

burn the money there will be no problem. No money, no problem. Sometimes it's the simplest solu- tions that crack the code.

Final mystery of the evening: the Japanese. In *Great Railway Jour- neys* (BBC2), Fergal Keane trav- elled from one end of Japan to the other and detected a mood of change in the Japanese people. "By my journey's end I had a feeling that the tyranny of the group would not survive here. Japan be- coming a society of individuals — now that's an exciting journey." The trouble is Japan always seems to visitors as if it is at the cross- roads, that everything is about to change, that traditions are melting like an ice-cream in your palm. But they never do. When the war was over, all the Bletchley staff were re- assigned to trying to fathom what makes the Japanese tick. That man with the pixie hood has been working flat out and still hasn't cracked this one.

REVIEW



Joe Joseph

Second World War German code- breakers undergoing training: they are sitting on a platform decy- phering Morse code while the plat- form is rocked like a rodeo horse, so as to train them to decipher Morse code under any conditions. Meanwhile their English counter- parts are wearing blue pixie hoods on their heads and tossing the crockery into the lake. Maybe this behaviour was deliberately or-

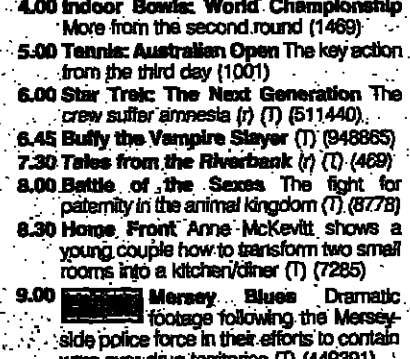
- BBC1**
- 6.00am Business Breakfast (50372)
 - 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (1) (96001)
 - 9.00am Killy (1) (844549)
 - 9.45am The Vanessa Show (1) (581839)
 - 10.55am News Weather (1) (777783)
 - 11.00am Real Rooms (778310)
 - 11.25am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (1) (774466)
 - 11.55am News Weather (1) (196036)
 - 12.00pm Call My Bluff (67440)
 - 12.30am Battersea Dogs' Home (25932)
 - 1.00pm One O'Clock News Weather (1) (80448)
 - 1.30pm National News Weather (8647848)
 - 1.40pm Neighbours (1) (6518285)
 - 2.05pm Iremode (1) (7441759)
 - 2.55pm Going for a Song (8336914)
 - 3.20pm The Weather Show (1) (276786)
 - 3.25pm Children's BBC: Playdays (2520894)
 - 3.45pm Little Monsters (862885)
 - 3.50pm ChuckleVision (862887)
 - 4.10pm See It Saw It (854579)
 - 4.35pm The Wild Show (1) (453001)
 - 5.00pm News Weather (1) (867085)
 - 5.10pm Blue Peter (1) (867085)
 - 5.35pm Neighbours (1) (60188)
 - 6.00pm Six O'Clock News Weather (1) (301)
 - 6.30pm Regional News Magazine (643)



The leopard is perfectly adapted for hunting at night (7pm)

- 7.00pm Wildlife on One insight into the nocturnal hunting techniques of the leopard, which relies on smell and hearing to capture its prey in pitch darkness (1) (1488)
- 7.30pm Dream House John Weir struggles to complete the grass roof (1) (827)
- 8.00pm Changing Rooms Anna Ryder Richardson brings a little Miami glamour to a Cardiff living room (1) (9378)
- 8.30pm Battersea Dogs' Home A litter of puppies delivered by Caesarean section are given slim chances of survival (1) (980310)
- 8.50pm National Lottery: Amazing Luck Stories How rare are the odds of the Lottery? (1) (980001)
- 9.00pm Nine O'Clock News: Regional News Weather (1) (2339)
- 9.30pm The X-Files Part one: Mulder and Scully search desperately for clues to a series of mass killings in which UFO abductions are being blamed (1) (980001)
- 10.15pm Inside Story New series. Behind the scenes at Billingsgate fish market (1) (190040)
- 11.10pm Last for Murder (TVM 1983) A man takes a holiday with his wife, little realising she intends to make it a vacation he'll never forget. Starring Virginia Madsen and Richard Thomas. Directed by Nathaniel Guttman (1) (252355)
- 12.35pm Moving Targets (TVM 1988) A teenage boy returns home from summer camp to find his family missing. Thriller, starring Jason Bateman. Directed by Chris Thompson (1) (970268)
- 2.00pm Weather (9304518)
- 2.05pm BBC News 24 (74142976)

- BBC2**
- 7.00am Children's BBC Breakfast Show: Dilly the Dinosaur (2960037) 7.05am Teletubbies (2703204) 7.30am Secret Spies (1) (826282) 7.55am The Really Wild Show (200778) 8.10am News (8485138) 8.20am Taz-Mania (863656)
 - 8.40pm Police Dot Shorts (8613389) 8.50pm Brum (8604223) 9.00pm Images of Sky (7831594) 9.10pm What? Where? When? Why? (781730) 9.25pm The Art of the Story (801846) 9.45pm Words and Pictures (801846)
 - 10.00pm Teletubbies (80339) 10.30pm Numberline (5677730) 10.45pm Cats' Eyes (5672285) 11.00pm Around Scotland (1236394) 11.20pm The Geography Programme (2525575) 11.40pm Science in Action (208517) 12.00pm News (475858) 12.15pm Hello aus Berlin (9131117) 12.30pm Working Lunch (23594) 1.00pm Brum (73448914)
 - 1.10pm The Antiques Show (1) (82345778)
 - 1.40pm The Arts and Crafts Show (86179778)
 - 2.10pm Indoor Bowls: World Championship Further second-round action (2295952)
 - 2.40pm News Weather (1) (8725117)
 - 2.45pm Westminster: The latest parliamentary news (1) (871914)
 - 3.55pm News Weather (1) (9353049)
 - 4.00pm Indoor Bowls: World Championship Move from the second round (1489)
 - 5.00pm Tennis: Australian Open The key action from the third day (1001)
 - 6.00pm Star Trek: The Next Generation The crew suffer amnesia (1) (511440)
 - 6.45pm Buffy the Vampire Slayer (1) (948885)
 - 7.30pm Tales from the Riverbank (1) (469)
 - 8.00pm Battle of the Sexes The fight for parity in the animal kingdom (1) (8778)
 - 8.30pm Home Front Anne McKevitt shows a young couple how to transform a small room into a chic interior (1) (725)
 - 9.00pm Mervyn Blue Drama: Detective police force following the Messey-side police force in their efforts to contain war over drug territories (1) (445381)



Sea and Jerry, who started their own ice-cream company (8.50pm)

- 9.50pm Blood on the Carpet Two hippies who fought the giant conglomerate Haagen-Dazs by producing their own ice-cream (1) (252355)
- 10.28pm Whitehall Shows (1) (74075)
- 10.30pm Newsnight (1) (333652)
- 11.15pm Picture This Polymath film capturing a cancer victim's final wishes (974372)
- 11.45pm 10x10 Short drama about a great-uncle with an unusual diet (1) (272830)
- 11.55pm Weather (840204)
- 12.00pm Despatch Box Political news (33773)
- 12.30pm BBC Learning Zone: Open University: Passing Judgements 1.00 The British Family: Sources and Myths 1.30 The French Revolution: Impact and Sources 2.00 Schools: Languages 4.00 Get By in French 5.00 Business and Training: Voluntary Matters 5.30 20 Steps to Better Management 5.45 Open University: TV 6.35 A Language for Movement

- HTV**
- 5.30am ITN Morning News (86652)
 - 6.00am GMTV (866594)
 - 9.25pm Tribes (1) (333485)
 - 10.30pm This Morning (1) (24901575)
 - 12.15pm HTV News (1) (212643)
 - 12.30pm ITN Lunchtime News (1) (10020)
 - 1.00pm WEST: Next Stop Richard Wyatt, Polly Lloyd and correspondents are in Cleveland, where they review local developments (91556)
 - 1.00pm WALS: Shortland Street Jerry buries the hatchet (1) (5156)
 - 1.30pm Snooker: Nations Cup Live coverage from Newcastle as the Republic of Ireland take on Northern Ireland (1) (55237407)
 - 3.15pm ITN News Headlines (1) (275502)
 - 3.20pm HTV News (1) (275293)
 - 3.25pm HTV: Mopstop's Shop (2742556) 3.35pm Teddycars (8201778) 3.45pm Jurnani (8200488) 4.10pm Whizzing (8346756) 4.40pm Mad for a (7878331)
 - 5.10pm A Country Practice Esme and Perce embark on a quest (7957402)
 - 5.40pm ITN Early Evening News (1) (246407)
 - 5.55pm HTV Crimeposters (200846)
 - 6.00pm Home and Away Sally does a spot of match-making (1) (58135)
 - 6.25pm WALS: Wales Tonight (1) (418914)
 - 6.25pm WEST: HTV Weather (810372)
 - 6.30pm WEST: The West Tonight (1) (339)
 - 7.00pm Emmerdale Graham confesses he loves Rachel (1) (5558)
 - 7.30pm Coronation Street Vera looks for a job (1) (223)



John Nettles and Daniel Casey star as Barnaby and Troy (8pm)

- 8.00pm Midsomer Murders New series. When a local property developer is violently murdered, Barnaby Rudge and Troy set out to find a motive for the killing. Starring John Nettles, Daniel Casey, Richard Briers and Judy Parfitt. Includes Lottery Result (1/4) (1) (8943)
- 10.00pm News at Ten; Weather (1) (83665)
- 10.30pm HTV News and Weather (1) (82685)
- 10.40pm Snooker: Nations Cup Highlights of the Republic of Ireland v Northern Ireland (758372)
- 11.15pm WEST: Rongedie Reno protects his former karate teacher from a revenge-bent fellow alumnus (820198)
- 11.45pm WALS: The Front Row Welsh Rugby Union Challenge Trophy (20198)
- 12.40pm Between Love and Hate (1893) Drama about a teenager who becomes a swimming instructor while on vacation at the home of his mother and father. Starring Susan Lucci. Directed by Rod Hardy (844150)
- 2.20pm Masterclass With the comedy writer Carole Lane (732686)
- 2.45pm Judge Judy Real-life cases (45173)
- 3.15pm Tribes Show earlier (1) (155605)
- 4.15pm Peter Latham earlier (1) (3360421)
- 4.50pm ITN Nightnews (8170832)
- 5.00pm Coronation Street (1) (86656)

- CENTRAL**
- As HTV West except:
 - 12.20pm-12.30pm Central News (6744391)
 - 1.00pm-1.10pm Echo Point (91556)
 - 3.20pm-3.25pm Central News (2752933)
 - 5.10pm-5.40pm Shortland Street (7957402)
 - 5.45pm-5.50pm Central News; Weather (418914)
 - 10.30pm-10.40pm Central News; Weather (82685)
 - 2.45pm-2.50pm Judge Judy (8201778)
 - 4.15pm-4.20pm Judge Judy (8201778)
 - 5.20pm-5.30pm Asian Eye (408657)

- As HTV West except:
- 12.15pm-12.20pm Westcountry News (8126443)
- 12.27pm-12.30pm Ruminations (8752310)
- 1.00pm-1.05pm Emmerdale (91556)
- 3.20pm-3.25pm Westcountry News (2752933)
- 5.08pm Birthday People (8359440)
- 5.10pm-5.40pm Home and Away (7957402)
- 6.00pm-7.00pm Westcountry News (83333)
- 10.30pm-10.40pm Westcountry News (83333)
- 11.45pm-12.40pm Anatomy Of Disaster (820198)

- As HTV West except:
- 12.15pm-12.20pm Meridian News (9126443)
- 1.00pm-1.30pm Shortland Street (7957402)
- 5.10pm-5.40pm Home and Away (7957402)
- 6.00pm Meridian Tonight (759)
- 6.30pm-6.40pm Birdwatch (339)
- 10.30pm-10.40pm Meridian News (83333)
- 11.45pm-12.40pm Meridian News (83333)
- 5.00pm-5.30pm Meridian News (83333)

- Starts: 5.00pm Sesame Street (1) (21546759)
- 7.00pm The Big Breakfast (4776594) 8.00pm Yagollon: Antoine De Caunes Tour de France (18329440) 9.30pm Race-Tail-Tat (85395594) 9.45pm Book Race (85395594) 10.00pm Stage Two Science (85395594) 10.15pm All About Us (85395594) 10.30pm The French Programme (7022833) 10.50pm Stop, Look, Listen (8705001) 11.00pm Durr Air Tri (8802004) 11.15pm Tackling Technology (8888827) 11.30pm Powerhouse (1) (2454240) 12.00pm Breakfast (1) (18329440) 12.30pm Sesame Street (1) (83341770) 1.00pm Planned Plant (1) (4776181) 1.30pm Roots to Success (1) (8612881) 1.45pm FILM: A Day of Thanks on Walton Mountain (1) (3402320) 3.30pm Hampton Court Palace (1) (5023295) 4.00pm Filmmakers' One (1) (850320) 4.30pm Ricki Lake (1) (5033204) 5.00pm Planned Plant (84232074) 5.30pm Countdown (1) (5020556) 6.00pm Newyddion 6 (1) (8803846) 6.10pm Hemo (1) (8560184) 7.00pm Pobl y Cwm (1) (8852630) 7.30pm Newyddion (1) (8852630) 8.00pm FILM: The French Programme (1) (8852630) 8.30pm FILM: The French Programme (1) (8852630) 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